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THE HISTORY OF A DEVELOPING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AMONG LUTHERANS IN
AMERICA FROM 1930 TO 1960, WITH REFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN
CHURCH, THE AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH, THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH, AND THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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PREFACE

Lutherans in America have generally been described as a group lacking a vital social consciousness and a sense of corporate social responsibility, except for the area of institutional welfare. They have been depicted as quietistic supporters of the status quo, rather than as a group interested in social reform. This portrait has, by and large, been correct.

In the last few decades, however, several significant changes have taken place so that the attitudes and actions relating to social issues on the part of many Lutheran individuals and groups can no longer be portrayed by the usual phrases. Gradually, a new sense of social responsibility has emerged, new understandings concerning social issues have developed, and new patterns for social action have evolved. Some of these new emphases stand in sharp contrast to the past tradition.

It is the purpose of this thesis to trace the history of this change with respect to Lutheran social responsibility, to document the shifting emphasis and understanding of the church's obligation toward society, to try to account for the change, and to try to describe what this new and broader understanding of social concern comprises.

By social responsibility I mean an awakened and broadening consciousness of and concern for the social issues confronting people today, a growing appreciation and acceptance of the corporate obligation of Christian groups to try to resolve the problems of society, an increasing desire on the basis of theological insights to bear a corporate

as well as individual witness toward the solution of these problems, and an expanding willingness to serve both as the conscience of the state and the instigator of corporate action to bring about social reforms.

It should be acknowledged that I identify affirmatively with the general direction of the broadening sense of social responsibility.

Nevertheless, that identification is not made uncritically. Thus I have sought not only to describe what has transpired in the recent past but have made some preliminary judgments concerning the direction of the new movement.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to my advisor throughout my doctoral program, Dr. Robert T. Handy, and to Dr. E. A. Steimle, who together with Dr. Handy, read and criticized this paper. I also want to express appreciation to my wife, Annelotte, who typed the bulk of this manuscript.

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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF THE SOCIAL CONCERN EXPRESSED BY LUTHERANS IN AMERICA IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL GOSPEL FROM 1870 TO 1929

Introduction

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, a new movement known as the social gospel emerged among American protestants. It was a movement which, in the words of Shailer Mathews, emphasized "the application of the teaching of Jesus and the total message of the Christian salvation to society, the economic life, and social institutions . . . as well as to individuals, . . ."¹ It became directly involved in such questions as labor-management relations, the unequal distribution of wealth, tax structures, laws regulating big business, prohibition, and ultimately, world peace. It was a movement which was critical of America at a time when many Americans were pleased with her achievements. It challenged features of the social economic status quo and called for reform in the name of religion and theology.

According to Charles Hopkins and Henry May, the social gospel arose chiefly because of the impact of the new industrial society (and scientific thought) upon the churches. They would argue that the chief influences which brought the movement into being were sociological rather than theological. When individuals confronted the situation prevailing in industrialized cities, they found the old theology irrelevant to the

¹Quoted in Charles H. Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism (New Haven, 1940), p. 3.

needs of the masses. They therefore developed a new understanding of theology which would, in their judgments, more adequately meet the needs of the times.¹

The men who were to lead the new movement emerged to the fore in the industrial centers of the north and east where they first became concerned about the plight of the working man. Because of heavy immigration, the supply of laborers in industrial communities was often heavier than the demand for them. Hence wages tended to be low and unemployment frequent. Moreover, as a result of the inauguration of the machine age, a 30 per cent displacement of workers in most industries was not uncommon. During the panic of the 1890's, 4,000,000 people were unemployed and unpaid, while the nation's total wealth increased from \$78,500,000,000 in 1890 to \$126,700,000,000 by 1900.² One-half of the nation's total wealth in 1890 was owned by one-third of 1 per cent of the national population,³ whereas, according to Harold Faulkner in his Quest for Social Justice, 10,000,000 people were living in poverty only ten years later.⁴

There were other problems as well. Men who could find employment worked for long hours with low pay, six or seven days a week, often under unhealthful conditions. On the job accidents were frequent. No unemployment compensation and no retirement benefits were available. Labor unions were just beginning to be formed. They lacked both the membership and the power to be very effective in bargaining with management.

¹See Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel, p. 3; and Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York, 1949), pp. 86ff.

²Ida Tarbell, The Nationalizing of Business, 1878-1898, IX (New York, 1936), pp. 68ff. and 260ff.

³Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel, pp. 79 and 100ff.

⁴The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914, XI (New York, 1931), p. 185.

When they attempted to strike to gain some of their demands, the public leaders generally criticized them for their violent means. In fact, even the right of labor to organize in order to bargain collectively was frequently challenged. The power structures were tipped in favor of the property owner and few voices were raised in support of the laboring man's effort to challenge these situations. Property and wealth were accorded rights not extended to human beings. Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager have referred to this situation as the "double standard of morality" which developed for labor and capital in the nineteenth century. They describe the double standard in this manner:

Combination of capital was regarded as in accordance with natural laws; combination of labor as a conspiracy. Monopoly was good business, and business men denounced or evaded the Sherman Act, but the closed shop was un-American. It was the duty of government to aid business and to protect business interests, but government aid to labor was socialistic. That business should go into politics was common sense, but that labor should go into politics was contrary to the American tradition. Property had a natural right to a fair return on its value, but the return which labor might enjoy was to be regulated strictly by the law of supply and demand.¹ Appeals to protect or enhance property interests were reasonable, but appeals to protect or enhance labor interests were demagogic. Brokers who organized business combines were respectable public servants, but labor organizers were public agitators. The use of Pinkerton detectives to protect business property was preserving law and order, but the use of force to protect the job was violence. To curtail production in the face of an oversupply of consumers' goods was sound business practice, but to strike for shorter hours in the face of an oversupply of labor was unsound.

Because of situations suggested by the above facts--situations which were frequently attributed to the spirit of competition within capitalism--social gospel leaders began to protest against these injustices in the capitalistic system and to call for specific social and economic reforms. At first, only a few voices were raised on behalf of the new causes. By the turn of the century, however, the desire for

¹The Growth of the American Republic, II (New York, 1950), p. 153.

social justice among protestants had grown to the point where the movement found an institutional expression in the Federal Council of Churches formed in 1908. The FCC adopted a statement which came to be known as the Social Creed of the Churches. The declaration called for such specific things as equal rights for all men in all stations of life, protection against hardship from labor displacement in swift industrial change, the use of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes, protection of the workers against dangerous machinery and disease while at work, the abolition of child labor, the regulation of conditions under which women might be employed, the suppression of the sweat system, the gradual reduction of hours of labor for adults, release from employment one day in seven, a living minimum wage, the equitable distribution of the products of industry, old age compensation, assistance to men injured at work, and the abatement of poverty.¹

The statement indicates a number of concerns of the social gospel. The movement, as C. H. Hopkins analyzes it, preferred economic justice to magnanimous charity.² This economic justice was to be realized by applying the law of love to the business world as well as to other aspects of society. Despite admitted difficulties, social gospel leaders felt progress was being made in the adaptation of the law of love to social spheres. Discussing this progress in 1912, Walter Rauschenbusch could speak of the Christianization of four of the five major social areas: the home, the church, the school, and the government. Business alone eluded the full impact of the Christianizing force. Even at this point,

¹ Jerald Brauer, Protestantism in America (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 251-252; and Clifton E. Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, 1960), p. 530.

² Rise of Social Gospel, p. 324.

however, Rauschenbusch saw new hope through the establishment of cooperatives, which, he felt, had remedied the unchristian law of competition by applying the law of concern for the neighbor.¹

Theological weaknesses did develop as a part of the social gospel. It nevertheless can be said, despite such weaknesses, that the movement developed within segments of American protestantism a new consciousness of social needs and a sense of corporate as well as individual responsibility to help meet those needs. Reform was to be achieved through regeneration of the individual and alteration of the social structures.

One of the major protestant denominations which remained aloof from the social gospel was the Lutheran church. The view has been held rather widely that Lutherans showed little social consciousness in this period, except for a rather widely scattered series of institutions of mercy, such as orphanages, hospitals, and homes for the aged. Lutherans are often depicted as having been quietistic supporters of the status quo. In 1912, for example, Walter Rauschenbusch could describe the Lutherans as follows:

Some denominations have not yet awakened. For instance, the Lutherans have beautiful institutional charities, but it is hard to discern any trace that as a body they are sharing in the new social enthusiasm. . . . They have never exercised the influence in public life to which their numbers, the splendid qualities of their Teutonic stock, and the ability of their leaders would have entitled them.²

Similarly, writing twenty years later, Dr. H. Richard Niebuhr observed that Lutheranism tended in practice "to give up the area of 'natural

¹Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York, 1912), pp. 128ff.

²Ibid., p. 24.

things' as beyond the scope of the Word; . . ."¹

Recent Lutheran historians have accepted as valid the characterization of the Lutherans as generally quietistic during the social gospel era, namely, approximately from 1870 to 1930. They agree with the judgment that the Lutherans at this time opposed the new sense of social responsibility being expressed in other protestant churches. The author of the most recent comprehensive history of American Lutheranism, Dr. Abdel Ross Wentz, writes that "not until well into the twentieth century did Lutheran churchmen and official bodies have anything to say about the industrial and economic situation that produced the major social problems of the time."² Dr. G. Everett Arden affirms this judgment in so far as the Augustana Synod is concerned when he writes:

With respect to the Church's direct responsibility to become involved in the Christianization of the social order, it must be said, however, that for the first three quarters of its existence, the Augustana Church exhibited the same spirit of quietism which has characterized so much of Lutheran history both in Europe and in America.³

Writing about the American Lutheran Church, Dr. Fred Meuser concluded that Lutherans during this period "were not ready to accept the Calvinistic concept of the church's responsibility to shape the life of society as a whole."⁴ Walter Baepler could write an entire history of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, without one reference to the social

¹H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York, 1959), p. 40.

²A Basic History of Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia, 1955), p. 331.

³Augustana Heritage (Rock Island, Ill., 1963), p. 359.

⁴The Formation of the American Lutheran Church (Columbus, 1958), p. 29.

gospel nor to Missouri's relation to it.¹ One can therefore say about most Lutherans of this era² what Dr. E. Clifford Nelson has written about the Norwegian Lutherans:

there was . . . no real appreciation of the Lutheran social ethic. The "social gospel" from which they turned . . . was not yet seen as one of the ways by which the church was being awakened to Christian social action. This was to come, but two world wars would lie between. Meanwhile, Christian welfare was directed solely to rescuing individuals, the lost, the homeless, the straying--the least of Christ's brethren.³

Sociological Factors in Lutheran Opposition to Social Gospel

Alienation of the Immigrant

One of the significant sociological factors involved in the failure of American Lutheranism to divorce itself from its quietistic stance and to accept a new and broader social responsibility was the fact that many Lutheran immigrants had been alienated from the church in Europe and did not find their way into Lutheran circles when they settled in America. This state of affairs was especially true of many of those sympathetic with the social reform movements of nineteenth century Europe, who might have helped lead American Lutherans to a new position.

Historians suggest that this situation was characteristic of immigrants from both German and Scandinavian backgrounds. W. O. Shanahan in his work, German Protestants Face the Social Question, has shown how this state of affairs obtained in Germany. He maintains that the Lutheran

¹Walter Baepler, A Century of Grace (St. Louis, 1947).

²There were indeed individuals and groups of Lutherans who did not altogether fit this pattern during this era. This is seen especially in the General Synod, one of the groups which formed the United Lutheran Church in America in 1918. See infra, pp. 26ff.

³The Lutheran Church among Norwegian Americans, II (Minneapolis, 1960), p. 112.

leadership in the mid-nineteenth century aligned itself solidly with the conservative aristocracy and thus antagonized the lower classes concerned with social revolution, from which most of the immigrants came. George Stephenson in his study of this subject in The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration points out that Swedish clergy also held aloof from nineteenth century political and social reform movements.¹ On the one hand, he contends, the clergy felt legislative reform did not get to the bottom of the issues, and on the other hand, they did not understand the social revolution taking place. Hence the Swedish Church, like the German Church, also opposed reform, aligning itself with the aristocracy and thus separating itself from the working classes. It was from the working classes that the bulk of Swedish immigration came.

Because of the Haugean revival, which was largely among the lower classes and frequently lay-led, the Norwegian lower classes were apparently not as disinterested in religion as was the case in Sweden or Germany, although there did develop a strong cleavage with the state church. Moreover, there was a liberal movement within the Norwegian Church in the late nineteenth century which was liberal socially and politically as well as theologically. Nevertheless, there was some estrangement in Norway also because the official leadership was solidly conservative socially.²

¹The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration (Minneapolis, 1932), p. 6. See also John Lindberg, The Background of Swedish Emigration to the United States (Minneapolis, 1930), pp. 33ff.; Florence Janson, The Background of Swedish Immigration, 1840-1930 (Chicago, 1931), pp. 1-110; and Gene Lund, "The Americanization of the Augustana Lutheran Church" (unpublished Th.D. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1954), pp. 106-108.

²Einar Molland, Church Life in Norway 1800-1950, trans. Harris Kaasa (Minneapolis, 1957), pp. 10-20, 77-78, and 85-86.

Historians have shown that the alienation of the lower classes from the church, which state of affairs existed in sections of Europe, was transplanted to America. Dr. J. L. Neve has pointed out that many of the political radicals who came from Germany after 1848 continued their anti-ecclesiastical activities in the United States through the German newspapers, attacking Christianity as hypocrisy.¹ An Augustana Lutheran historian has described how this same kind of hostility was transplanted by the Swedes through the lodges and social groups formed to promote fellowship among the Swedes in the new land. The liberals in the lodges regarded the Augustana clergy as fanatics and the pastors considered the lodge members as unconverted hirelings. The tension was increased when the Augustana rule barring secret society members from the churches was also applied to the Grange and the Knights of Labor.²

From these facts and judgments, therefore, one can surmise that many Germans and Scandinavians interested in social reform, who retained the name Lutheran in Europe, never found their way into the Lutheran church in America. Therefore their concern for social reform was channeled either through other churches or, more likely, through non-ecclesiastical agencies.³

¹ A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America (2nd ed. rev.; Burlington, Iowa: 1916), p. 113.

² Oscar Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America, 1860-1910: The Formative Period, II (Davenport, Iowa: 1956), pp. 16 and 50. A. R. Wentz estimates that less than 30 per cent of the Norwegians, about 20 per cent of the Swedes, and only 7 per cent of the Danes joined an American church. See Wentz, Lutheranism in America, p. 186.

³ There is need for a more detailed historical and sociological study of Lutheran participation in such movements as the Populist Party, Progressive Party, and the Non-Partisan League.

The Rural and Linguistic Isolation

One of the most important factors to influence the formation of the social gospel has been identified by Henry May and Charles Hopkins as the impact of modern industrial society upon the churches. From this factor, Lutherans were also largely immune during this period because of their rural and linguistic isolation.

As early as the time of the Revolution, the preponderant mass of Lutherans were engaged in agriculture. This arrangement continued to be true during the entire nineteenth century and on into the twentieth as German and Scandinavian Lutherans settled in the farming regions of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas.¹ While a certain sectional urbanization of the Lutheran church did transpire toward the end of the nineteenth century, it did not alter Lutheranism's predominantly rural character. For example, in 1870 there were only 34 Lutheran congregations in New York City, but by 1910 there were 134, and in 1918 there were 166. Despite this kind of shift, however, more than three-fourths of American Lutherans in 1910 lived in rural communities or towns of fewer than 25,000 inhabitants.²

In addition to the factor of rural isolation, language isolation must also be considered as one of the influences which retarded the Americanization of the American Lutheran churches. As early as 1792, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the leading Lutheran synod at that time,

¹In fact, three-quarters of the Scandinavians settled in these rural regions. In 1880, for example, only 18 per cent of the Norwegians were engaged in manufacturing. With respect to the Swedes, it has been observed that "until the close of the nineteenth century the church population of Swedish-America was overwhelmingly rural, both in influence and in number." See O. M. Norlie, History of the Norwegian People in America (Minneapolis, 1925), p. 346; and Stephenson, Religious Aspects, p. 308.

²Wentz, Lutheranism in America, pp. 47 and 191.

introduced the word German into its title, and in 1805, it forbade the use of any language other than German at its synodical meetings. The Ohio Synod, which had organized an English-speaking conference as early as 1836, continued to use German in its synodical reports into the 1920's and used German as its primary language until 1930.¹

The Norwegian Lutheran Church in America used the Norse language so predominantly that the president's annual report did not appear in English until 1926, and the church retained Norwegian in its name until 1946. In 1905, only 5 per cent of its sermons were given in English; in 1910, only 13 per cent; in 1915, only 22 per cent; in 1920, only 34 per cent; and in 1924, only 47 per cent.²

The Swedish Lutherans began the use of English early, but large waves of immigration in the latter part of the nineteenth century halted the Americanization process until in the twentieth century. A professor to lecture in English was elected to Augustana Seminary and College at Rock Island, Illinois as early as 1865, and by 1883, the number of hours of instruction in English exceeded the Swedish 120 to 106. Nevertheless, the vast influx of Swedes at the end of the century stemmed the tide toward English. In 1891, for example, Augustana Synod decided not to establish an English-speaking conference within the synod. By 1907, Augustana had a total of 496 mission congregations, but no more than five of them used the English language exclusively. Not until 1924 did Augustana use English throughout its ordination service for the seminary graduating class. Only in that same year, Augustana minutes began to

¹The linguistic isolation was more characteristic of the American, Augustana, and Evangelical Lutheran churches and their antecedents than of the United Lutheran Church.

²Norlie, History of Norwegian People, p. 357.

appear in English. The extended presence of the language barrier thus served as a strong force in isolating Swedish Lutherans from the American scene during much of the era in which the social gospel was dominant.¹

World War I helped to hasten the use of English among American Lutherans, however. Several states had laws prohibiting the use of a foreign language. According to Clifton Olmstead, the war particularly accelerated Americanization among the German speaking Lutherans because of strong anti-German sentiment. The shift to English characterized Swedish Lutherans as the use of English gained greater momentum in Augustana during the 1920's.²

Despite the impact of World War I, however, the use of foreign languages was widespread among Lutherans during the period from 1870 to 1930. This factor served to protect sections of American Lutherans from the impact of the social gospel.

A Tendency Toward Republicanism

It must be noted that when the immigrant arrived in America, his spirit of individualism and self reliance in its rural isolation often found kinship with the spirit of the Republican party. This affiliation was aided by the fact that Lincoln was a Republican. Because of him, the Republican party was often identified in the minds of many as "the party of moral ideas." This tradition was aided among Scandinavians by the support of the two most influential Scandinavian newspapers, the Swedish Hemlandet and the Norwegian Skandinaven. Both of them were solidly

¹Lund, "Americanization of Augustana," pp. 109ff., 161ff., and 172ff.; and Arden, Augustana Heritage, p. 359.

²History of Religion in the United States, p. 511; and Lund, "Americanization of Augustana," pp. 171ff.

Republican during their existence, the latter still surviving at the outbreak of World War II.¹

Dr. Theodore Blegen, former Dean of the University of Minnesota, quotes journalist N. A. Grevstad as saying that "for a generation or more after the Civil War . . . the Norwegians remained all but solidly republican in national and local politics."² This is illustrated by the fact that of the twelve Norwegians named governor between 1892 and 1925, ten were Republicans. Of the twenty-two elected to the U. S. House of Representatives between 1883 and 1935, eighteen were Republican, one was Prohibitionist, one a Populist, one a Democrat, and one a Farm-Laborer. Of the seven who were elected to the U. S. Senate between 1895 and 1923, six were Republican, and the seventh, Senator H. Shipstead of Minnesota, later left the Democratic-Farm-Labor Party and became a Republican.³ Writing about the Swedes, Professor Stephenson said that, because they were hard working, efficient, and frugal, they gained wealth rather rapidly. Hence "given a year or two in the United States, the Swedish immigrant, irrespective of his politics in the old country, became an adherent of the Republican party."⁴

In a study of The German Element in the United States, A. B. Faust observed that the slavery issue helped bring the Germans within the Republican party. In addition, he said they generally supported the "sound money" policies usually associated with Republicans. Congenial

¹Wentz, Lutheranism in America, p. 171; Theodore Blegen, Norwegian Migration to America (Northfield, Minnesota: 1940), p. 548; and Lund, "Americanization of Augustana," p. 67.

²Quoted in Blegen, Norwegian Migration to America, p. 553.

³Norlie, History of Norwegian People, pp. 489ff.

⁴Stephenson, Religious Aspects, p. 417.

to republicanism also was what Faust called the German sense of individual responsibility, which often expressed itself in what he termed a stubborn unwillingness to cooperate on joint enterprises.¹

These writers therefore suggest that Lutheran laymen tended to be conservative politically and economically, and that they associated themselves most generally with the Republican party, whose position akin to "rugged individualism" did not foster the development of a corporate responsibility for social action. While, according to Faust and Blegen, some Germans and Scandinavians did find their way into the Populist and Democratic-Farm-Labor movements, the number of active Lutherans engaged in these movements appears to have been rather minimal. This was likely also the case of the Swedish Lutherans, about whom Stephenson has remarked:

It happened occasionally that if a member was known to be a Democrat, or what was infinitely worse, a Populist, the pastor and certain members of the church council might wait upon him and endeavor to convince him of the error of his ways.²

Sociologically, therefore, it would appear that during the period from 1870 to 1930, the majority of American Lutherans tended to live in rural areas, to speak a foreign language, and to identify themselves economically and politically with the more conservative Republican party. The Americanization process, already fairly well advanced in what came to be known as the ULCA and to some extent in Augustana, had not yet been completed.

¹A. B. Faust, The German Element in the United States, II (Boston, 1909), pp. 310ff. and 467ff. See also Carl E. Schneider, The German Church on the American Frontier (St. Louis, 1939), pp. 351ff.

²Religious Aspects, p. 393.

The implication of these facts is significant: by and large, Lutherans did not confront the new forces of an industrialized society, which, according to May and Hopkins, were so influential in causing the rise of the social gospel. Isolated from the impact of the rapidly changing industrial society, Lutheran theology and ethics were not challenged in the same fashion as those of some churches working in more urban settings. Realizing the relative absence among Lutherans of encounter by an industrialized society and the association of Lutheranism with a strong political-economic individualism, one can more easily understand why a new social consciousness did not emerge in this era.

Theological Factors in Lutheran Opposition to Social Gospel

There were also doctrinal factors involved in the Lutheran rejection of the theological foundations on the basis of which some protestants were asserting their new social consciousness.¹ Two recent Lutheran historians, A. R. Wentz and Harold Lentz, have suggested that the disagreement focused chiefly on the doctrine of man's sinful nature in relation to God and the need for the regeneration of the individual soul.² An article in an 1872 Lutheran Quarterly illustrates this view:

The wisdom of man may re-adjust the existing elements of society, but more than a new arrangement is required; a new creation is needed. Nothing less than a regeneration of human nature will bring it into its right relations, conditions and place. . . .

¹The most comprehensive study of the Lutheran reaction to the social gospel has been done by Dr. Harold Lentz, "History of the Social Gospel in the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Yale, 1943). The study concentrates on the General Synod, which merged with the General Council and the United Synod of the South to form the United Lutheran Church in 1918. It does, however, reflect the key points at which Lutheran opposition to the social gospel was registered.

²See Wentz, Lutheranism in America, p. 331, and Lentz, "Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 116.

While it is true that Christianity is designed to express its divine power upon the world of humanity, yet it acts first and [sic] chiefly upon the individuals that make up the aggregate. Hence, the re-adjustment of the whole, is the re-adjustment of the parts that make up that whole.¹

The root of all the troubles facing man, in the minds of most Lutherans, lay in personal and individual sin. From this fact, the church was to take its clue as to the remedy for the human predicament. Correction for the malady, Lutherans contended, could come only by preaching law and gospel to the individual sinner to bring him to repentance. Only when this was accomplished, the argument continued, was the church coming to grips with the real issue. Concentrating on the environment was like shadow boxing. Dr. Lentz goes so far as to say that an evangelical fervor plus an emphasis on changing society through consecrated individuals were the outstanding characteristics of Lutherans in America during the social gospel era.² He attributes this emphasis to the pietistic tradition brought to America by Muhlenberg. Dr. Wentz gives a parallel judgment when he writes that

the general position of Lutherans at this time was that the work of the church is to regenerate human souls one by one, and that social reform must begin with individuals, not groups. The program to save men by changing their environment was held to be nothing more than golden-rule ethics which forfeits the spiritual worth of the individual.³

To be sure, social gospel leaders like Rauschenbusch had emphasized the need for regeneration and reform of both the individual and the social forms, but Lutherans had a tendency to notice the emphasis the social gospel devoted to programs rather than that which was

¹J. H. Smyth, "Christianity the Readjuster," Lutheran Quarterly, II (April, 1872), p. 209.

²"History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 341.

³Lutheranism in America, p. 331.

directed toward persons, and concentrated their opposition against this feature.

The emphasis which Lutherans placed on the conversion, rehabilitation, and responsibility of each person provided them with an individualistic ethic which the social gospel leaders said was ineffective in the new industrialized areas. Lutherans were fairly unanimous in their response that their ethic was the only biblical and effective one.¹ This assumption was to be re-examined a generation later. For the time being, however, this strong individualism thwarted the development of a broader sense of social responsibility.

Lutherans also differed with social gospel leaders at the point of Christology. At the 1911 meeting of the General Council, Dr. J. A. W. Haas, president of Muhlenberg College, addressed the convention on the theme, "Theses on the Person and Work of Christ with Reference to Modern Errors." In this address, Dr. Haas argued that Christ was not just a unique founder of religion, but that he was both human and divine. Christ was the historical incarnation of the eternal son of God, who made perfect satisfaction for the sins of the world through his life and death. Dr. Haas went on to state that

because Christ is the Saviour of the soul, His relation to society is through the individual soul and through the community of saints, the church, but He is not an abolisher of outworn forms of society,² a reformer of evils, or an adjuster of its economic distresses.

In this address by Dr. Haas, four significant theological positions in opposition to the social gospel are evident. The first has

¹General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, Minutes (Philadelphia, 1915), pp. 247ff.

²Ibid., (1911), p. 228.

to do with the person of Christ; the second and third have to do with Christ's function; and the fourth relates to an inference to be drawn concerning the function of the church.

With respect to the person of Christ, it can be said that Lutherans at this time held a very high Christology. They clung to the Chalcedonian formulation that Christ was both human and divine. Thus their view stood in contrast to the kind of Christology which was permeating social gospel theology. C. H. Hopkins has said that there was a trend in the social gospel away from a high Christology to a human Jesus who was "the epitome of a loving God at work in the world." Hopkins said "the sympathizing Jesus gradually replaced the Christ of Calvary."¹ Against this kind of an emphasis the Lutherans reacted strongly and attacked the social gospel leaders and others who had departed from more orthodox Christological formulations.

Lutherans also disagreed with the social gospel emphasis with respect to the functions of Christ. Social gospel leaders, on the one hand, stressed both the moral theory of the atonement and the dynamic which Christ gave for the reformation of social structures. The Lutherans, on the other hand, emphasized strongly the satisfaction theory of the atonement and denied that Christ came to reform the social structures. Christ had come instead, they argued, to save the individual souls from sin, death, and the power of the devil. The example of Christ's interest in the individual gave the church its second reason for believing that the only way for the church to reform the world was to reform people rather than programs, to change the individual rather than his environment.

¹Rise of Social Gospel, pp. 16 and 19.

Another point at which Lutherans advanced theological reasons in opposition to the social gospel lay in the area of the relationship between church and state. President Theodore E. Schmauck spoke to this issue at the General Council meeting in 1915. A year earlier he had received from the Archbishop of Uppsala, through the offices of President Mathews and Secretary McFarland of the Federal Council of Churches, an invitation to participate in an appeal for peace to the governments of Europe. Schmauck reported to the convention that he had declined the invitation lest it appear that he was working in conjunction with the Federal Council (and thus be guilty of "unionism"). Then he added:

I further took the position that the American doctrine of the separation of Church and State, as held by the General Council . . . does not easily permit of our entrance into the political sphere of Europe, even by way of appeal, and that we are not in sympathy with such efforts to influence the civil authorities, as the papal curia in Rome on the one hand, and the Federal Council of Churches in America on the other hand regard as legitimate and necessary.¹

The convention later adopted a resolution which expressed the Lutheran reluctance to participate in an official way in civic affairs.

Whenever possible, pastors encourage their members to labor as faithful citizens, who have the interests of the community and of society in general at heart, in all laudable efforts or movements designed to suppress crying social evils and effect a betterment of civic and social conditions generally. They should be careful, however, not to involve the congregation or the Lutheran Church as such in civic and social movements of this character.²

The statement and resolution illustrate the fairly common practice at this juncture in American Lutheranism to draw a strict line of separation between the sphere of the state and the sphere of the church. Neither was to interfere with the operation of the other, nor was either even to advise the other. A result of this view was that the

¹General Council, Minutes (1915), p. 21.

²Ibid., pp. 250 and 257.

church could not and did not function as the conscience of the state, nor did the church express responsibility for bearing a corporate witness to the state on major social issues. The Lutheran church, therefore, tended to accept without criticism what the state did.

Dr. D. M. Gilbert observed in 1889 that the seminary had taught that "the Church has nothing to do, directly, with politics; and that 'ministers, as such, have no political duties.'" He went on to argue that since the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, ministers should confine themselves to spiritual matters. With respect to ministers preaching on problems relating to the state, Gilbert concluded:

these are matters altogether apart from your appointed sphere; you were not made judges or oracles with regard to them; you were not ordained to preach your personal opinions of public measures, however important they may be, or however clear and strong your convictions concerning them, but the Gospel of Christ and that alone.¹

Lentz maintains that Gilbert and Schmauck represented the majority attitude among Lutherans at this time with respect to the separation of church and state.²

One of the chief text books used in America during this period for the study of dogmatics was Heinrich Schmid's, The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Schmid wrote that "the civil authority, no less than the ministry, is an estate appointed by God. . . . The power entrusted to it, with all its prerogatives, is derived, therefore, from Him; . . ."³ The primary duty of the state, Schmid said, was to preserve outward order and good behavior. In addition, it was to pro-

¹"The Relation of the Church to Questions of Governmental Policy," Lutheran Quarterly, XIX (October, 1889), pp. 590 and 595.

²"History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 133.

³The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (3d ed. rev.; Minneapolis, 1961), p. 616.

tect the institution of Christianity without interfering with the internal doctrinal or disciplinary affairs of the church.

It is clear that Schmid's emphasis lies with order rather than with justice. In his entire section relating to the political estate, he discusses only the source and power of the political magistrate and says nothing with respect to the rights and responsibilities of the people toward government, with the single exception of the statement that they must, when ordered to sin, obey God rather than men. He quotes Leonard Hutterus as saying that "Christians are necessarily under obligation to obey their magistrates and laws, except when they command us to sin; then we must obey God rather than men, . . ."¹ If there had been a sensitive understanding of what was meant by the word sin, one might argue that such a statement gave the individual Christian a broad range of items concerning which he might oppose the state. In the absence of such, however, the statement tended to rest heavily on the factor of obedience. Any resistance that might be countenanced was not to take the form of open rebellion. Schmid also quotes John Gerhard to the effect that the magistrate is under God and therefore must "recognize God as his superior, and, in the use of his power, to conform to His will and laws."² On the basis of this statement, one could not say that Schmid leaves the state as an autonomous unit. Inasmuch, however, as prevailing opinion would not allow the church to make any statements to the state, or even to individual Christians, as to the probable meaning of God's will for any given political situation, the practical effect of the position was to leave the state autonomous. The only qualification would

¹ Quoted in Schmid, Doctrinal Theology, p. 618.

² Ibid., p. 617.

be the conscience of the individual citizen or officer of the state.

This conscience the church also failed to quicken, inasmuch as it preferred not to address itself to the mundane questions of civic affairs.

As Dr. C. O. Solberg said in his The Spirit of American Lutheranism, Lutherans tried to avoid secularism by an inclination to "eschew" politics and speak only of "the things of the soul." "It is no accident that a Lutheran pastor was heralded in the public press for his plain statement of protest against politics in the pulpit."¹

According to Dr. Lentz, the following statement by the Rev. F. G. Gotwald, editor of the Lutheran Church Work, represented the majority Lutheran view, even in the General Synod. The Rev. Mr. Gotwald had written:

The church and the pulpit must deal in a courageous and unambiguous way on all moral subjects, and at times, it may be, on all subjects in their moral and religious aspects, and yet there is a line plainly drawn and beyond which the church cannot justly go, and maintain the confidence and respect of men. . . . The church has no more right to talk about depreciation of gold or bi-metalism, or free trade, or reform than to give lectures on anatomy, or the wonders of the South pole. Nor has she any right to tell an employer what wages he should pay, or how many hours his employees should work, any more than to tell the employee what laws they should draw up in the trade unions or how they ought to apportion the spending of their income. There are persons and societies who should undertake to do these things, but not the Christian church or the Christian minister. If he succeeds in quickening the conscience and resolving the will by the Word and examples of Christ, employers and employees will settle these questions for themselves, without requiring the church's arithmetic. . . . Ministers as a rule are not expected to have that expert knowledge required in the intelligent discussion of such problems. When they make that attempt at such discussion it usually produces distraction and division. The teaching and example of the head of the church give no encouragement to religious teachers who work along such lines.²

¹The Spirit of American Lutheranism (Minneapolis, 1917), pp. 106-107.

²Quoted in Lentz, "History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 251.

That the principle of obedience was deeply imbedded can be seen in a remark of President Schmauck to the General Council after the United States entry in World War I. "It has become, and will be more and more, the duty of the Church to carry out and live up to the principles of Lutheranism in relation to civil affairs, and to support and obey the state," he said. The Council responded to his words by passing a resolution saying that Lutheran doctrine "commands loyalty to the Government of the United States; . . ."¹ The General Synod, which was the most receptive of all Lutheran groups to new social ideas, expressed similar sentiments when it convened in 1917. It adopted a resolution pledging "unswerving loyalty" to the United States government.²

American Lutherans thus held to twin principles which prevented an effective assault on the public conscience. First, their emphasis on the divine ordinance of the office or magistrate tended to underwrite the status quo and to emphasize obedience and order. Second, their sharp theological separation of the functions of church and state tended to thwart any effective witness on the part of the church either to the state or to the individual Christian.

Lutherans also chose not to emphasize two other ideas important to the social gospel leaders, namely the immanence of God and the possibility of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Instead, Lutherans argued that the doctrine of God's immanence tended to divest Christianity of its supernatural elements. They would instead emphasize the radical difference of the creator from the creation and the initi-

¹General Council, Minutes (1917), pp. 14 and 30.

²General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Convention (Philadelphia, 1917), p. 165.

ative of God in breaking in upon the world rather than identifying himself with the stuff of the world as such.¹ In addition, they tended to see the kingdom in other worldly or spiritual terms. They did not become possessed with the idea of building the kingdom of God on earth.²

It would appear, therefore, from the foregoing discussion, that there were also substantial theological reasons involved in the Lutheran opposition to the new social consciousness and responsibility expressed by the social gospel. At a later date, both groups were to re-examine their positions. In the process of re-examination, they would move closer to each other. During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth, however, most Lutherans were to remain opposed to the social gospel for the sociological and theological reasons mentioned.

To this discussion must now be added a final note, namely that of the confessional isolation in which Lutherans worked. The nineteenth century had begun with a definite theological openness under the leadership of S. S. Schmucker. This theological stance was epitomized by the Definite Synodical Platform of 1855, which represented a mediating attempt to adjust to new currents of thought in the world. It went so far as to suggest altering the Augsburg Confession. In the battle which surrounded the Platform, the conservative forces emerged strengthened. It was now clear, as Dr. A. R. Wentz has observed, that "the future of the Lutheran church in America was to belong to the conservative type of

¹Lentz, "History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 153; and General Council, Minutes (1911), p. 37.

²Gilbert, Lutheran Quarterly, XIX (October, 1889), pp. 590 and 595; and General Council, Minutes (1915), p. 247ff.

Lutheranism."¹ Disagreement became so great over the confessional issue that some Lutherans left the General Synod and formed the General Council in 1867.² The tension between the two groups remained throughout most of the nineteenth century because the General Synod bound itself less formally to the Augsburg Confession. As a result of mounting pressure, the General Synod retreated in 1895 and adopted a resolution saying that the Augsburg Confession was "in perfect consistence" with the Bible.³ The conservative trend continued to grow so that in 1911, the General Synod revised her constitution to say that the Unaltered Augsburg Confession was "a correct exhibition of the faith and doctrine" and acknowledged the other Lutheran symbols as of great historic and interpretive value.⁴

Abdel Ross Wentz, writing in 1955, demonstrated that the conservative tide was still very much alive, when he observed with satisfaction that this action of the General Synod "was the culmination of a splendid forward movement in the confessional conservation of the General Synod, a movement that extended over a period of forty years and placed that body on an unequivocal Lutheran basis."⁵

In a very real sense, one cannot speak of a conservative trend within American Lutheranism from 1870 to 1930, except with respect to the General Synod. All the other bodies were conservative from the be-

¹Wentz, Lutheranism in America, pp. 143-144.

²The two groups came together again in 1918 when the United Lutheran Church in America was formed. See infra, p. 45.

³General Synod, Proceedings (1895), p. 216.

⁴Ibid. (1911), p. 23.

⁵Lutheranism in America, p. 240.

ginning of the era to the end. As Wentz observed, "the confessional basis of the General Council was very clear and very definite from the beginning, and no party within the body ever called it into question."¹

He continued:

As to the general bodies of Lutherans centering in the Middle West, we cannot properly speak of an advance in loyalty to the Lutheran confessions. Among the Missouri, Ohio, Iowa, and the Norwegian Lutherans, supra-confessional ground was taken from the beginning, and held. There was no progress either in doctrinal positions or in their interpretation.²

With this kind of confessional loyalty present among almost all American Lutheran groups, there was a natural tendency to reject rather quickly all theological formulations which did not correspond exactly to the formulations in the Confession of Augsburg. This tendency helped to postpone a significant confrontation between traditional Lutheran theology and a theology expressing a new social consciousness.

A Positive Affirmation of Social Responsibility

While it is true that Lutherans in general rejected the social gospel, it would not be correct to say that they had no social concern. This concern, however, was expressed in a way different from the main currents of the day. Lutheran social consciousness and responsibility in this era is best illustrated by the term "Inner Mission." That is to say, rather than challenging the basic structures of society and working to change them, the Lutherans tended to concentrate on alleviating the suffering of those unfortunate enough to be caught in the midst of life's tragedies. This was done through a rather vast network of charitable agencies.

¹Lutheranism in America, p. 241.

²Ibid., p. 246.

Historically, the Inner Mission movement precedes the social gospel by perhaps two centuries. According to Dr. Theodore Tappert, it has dual roots in orthodoxy and pietism. On the one hand, it expresses orthodoxy's acceptance of the present orders of society (the status quo) as God-given. On the other hand, it reflects the pietistic concern for "the least of these my brethren" in terms of institutions of mercy. While it is true that individual works of mercy had been practiced in Lutheranism prior to pietism, nevertheless, it was not until the time of Francke that such organs of charity, relying solely on free-will offerings for support, began to sprout on a large scale, Tappert maintained.¹

Among American Lutherans, institutions of mercy and charity--such as hospitals, orphanages, old peoples' homes, and rehabilitation centers--began slowly to multiply about the middle of the nineteenth century. Conspicuous for his leadership in this movement was the Rev. W. A. Passavant.² The story of his work is illustrative of the piety and procedures which gave new birth to the American Lutheran Inner Mission movement. Passavant, who was called to Pittsburgh as a pastor in 1844, has been characterized as a deeply pious, energetic man of great leadership ability. He became interested in the great deaconess institutions of Germany and decided to visit Fliedner's famous deaconess institute at Kaiserswerth, Germany. Following this visit, Passavant returned to America and opened his own deaconess home in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1848, with a donation of twenty-five cents he himself

¹"Orthodoxism, Pietism, and Rationalism: 1580-1830," Christian Social Responsibility, II: The Lutheran Heritage, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 52 and 73-76.

²The biographical references to Passavant used in this section are taken from G. H. Gerberding, Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant (Greenville, Pa.: 1906), pp. 114ff., 130ff., and 187ff.

provided. With no money in the treasury, with no deaconesses nor nurses, with no furniture except one bed, with neither food nor equipment,

Passavant recruited patients for his new hospital from a boatload of wounded soldiers being returned from the Mexican war. When cholera broke out, neighbors panicked and stoned his hospital, forcing most of the patients to flee. Loading both the remaining patients and the beds into a wagon, Passavant left the city, not knowing where he would go. He reported that as he walked, he prayed. A short distance from the city, Passavant discovered a women's seminary which was closed for the summer, and he simply occupied the building. Without funds, he signed an option to buy the building for \$5,500 and unloaded his patients. Later, friends gave him money to buy the property. In this manner the Pittsburgh hospital was begun and a movement to erect a whole series of charitable institutions was launched.

In most instances, since these new institutions all relied on voluntary contributions, the financing of them was very difficult. The methods employed reflect a kind of piety that had a limitless faith in God's providence. This is expressed in many of Passavant's writings, one of which is recorded here:

"The Lord will provide." This sweet truth is every day made good in the history of the Infirmary. Humanly speaking, the support of a family of more than thirty persons without any vested funds is a serious business; but so wondrous are the resources of God that, like the disciples whom Jesus sent forth without scrip or purse, it has never lacked. The promise of the Lord has been daily realized, and their bread and water have been made sure. In so many ways, the most unlooked-for and remarkable, does God provide, that unbelief is rebuked and distrust would seem to be the most unnatural of sins.

Here are a few instances, out of many similar ones, of the way in which God provides. The cellar is empty, the treasury exhausted, twenty-five patients in the house, and other sufferers are seeking admission. Coming home in the evening we find the passage filled with bags, potatoes, apples, flour--two dray loads in all. The next day a canoe load of potatoes comes from Neville Island, nine miles below the city. It is the close of the year. The first of January is approach-

ing, the time for settling the accounts; bills are sent in for bread, medicine, coal, and other necessities of life, and these must be paid; but the Lord knoweth that we have need of all these things, and He provides. One day a gentleman in passing presses a five-dollar note into our hand. Coming home, a letter with ten dollars is on our table. Calling at a store on business, a merchant, unasked, makes a donation of one hundred dollars. Going to church on Christmas morning, two ten-dollar gold pieces are handed us from the boarders at one of the hotels. A gentleman, almost a stranger, obtained a number of annual subscriptions and calls to communicate the names.¹

In 1855, Passavant resigned from his parish work to devote all his time to the founding and organizing of charitable institutions and of home mission congregations, particularly among English-speaking people. In practically every instance, the pattern was the same: find a house, begin the work, secure a mortgage, pay later. He started a hospital in Milwaukee in 1863, purchased at a price of \$12,000, with only \$2 cash on hand. When he opened a hospital in Chicago, Passavant reported that "the entire absence of means was the smallest difficulty in the commencement of this work. The want of a suitable building was one of the greatest."²

Long hours were spent in soliciting funds and traveling from center to center. When he arrived at a given institution for a brief period to collect funds and oversee the work, Passavant invariably found the institution with a huge operating deficit, and the creditors waiting in line to see him. When his subordinates inquired where he expected to obtain the funds, Passavant would reply: "The Lord will provide." Not infrequently, however, on a day set aside for the solicitation of funds, Passavant would return without cash but with additional charity cases. He would simply announce to the small working staff: "The Lord did not

¹ W. A. Passavant quoted in Gerberding, Life and Letters of Passavant, pp. 254-255.

² Ibid., p. 420.

send us any money but sent one of His people to be cared for."¹

These stories about Passavant illustrate the pattern by which numerous institutions of mercy among Lutherans came into being during the nineteenth century. By 1890 the various Lutheran churches were operating thirty-two orphanages, four homes for the aged, an institution for the deaf and dumb, six deaconess homes, eleven hospitals, eight immigrant missions, and one seamen's mission. By 1916, there were sixty-one orphan homes valued at \$3,529,708 caring for 4,206 orphans. There were forty-five homes for the aged providing care for 1,495 persons in buildings valued at \$1,457,843. There were forty-six hospitals valued at \$3,748,500 caring for 56,126 patients. In addition, there were nine deaconess mother houses; six homes for epileptics, crippled children, and feeble-minded persons; nineteen hospices; and nineteen immigrant and seamen's missions, caring for 254,405 persons.²

The difference in thinking between the social gospel and those Lutherans who expressed their social consciousness through Inner Mission work is well illustrated in a statement submitted by the Inner Mission Board to the General Council in 1915 and adopted by the convention. It listed six points of disagreement with the statement on Social Service found in the 1915 year book of the Federal Council of Churches. These points were as follows:

1) The social gospel was said to be largely a humanitarian, civic, and ethical movement designed to effect structural changes in society, whereas Inner Missions was said to be both humanitarian and redemptive, seeking to change both the inner and the outer life.

¹Passavant quoted in Gerberding, Life and Letters of Passavant, p. 426.

²The Lutheran Church Almanac (Philadelphia, 1916), pp. 74-77.

2) The social gospel, with "social justice" as its watchword, was described as seeking to influence legislation, whereas the Inner Mission, with what was termed "Christ-like service" as its watchword, sought to bring people under the influence of the gospel.

3) The social gospel, with its eye toward the inequalities and inhumanities of life, was charged with failure to see that these inequalities stemmed from sin, whereas the Inner Mission, described as "not less sensitive as to the inequalities and inhumanities of life," was said to have seen sin as the cause.

4) The social gospel was said to be seeking to establish an "altruistic, materialistic heaven" on earth, whereas Inner Mission was said to be seeking to ameliorate hard conditions, and, while offering no Utopia, stressing "a kingdom of spiritual rather than material blessedness."

5) The social gospel, in its attempts to change the whole of society, was described as socialistic and communistic, rather than individualistic, whereas the Inner Mission saw "the individual as the unit with which it has to deal primarily."

6) The social gospel was said to be more related to the state than the church, since the watchword of the state was justice and its arm the power of the law; whereas the Inner Mission was said to be more related to the church than to the state, because the watchword of the church was mercy and its arm that of love.¹

It was largely through these evangelistically and individualistically oriented institutions of mercy that the Lutherans expressed their social consciousness during this period. There were, however,

¹General Council, Minutes (1915), pp. 247-249.

minority groups who gave expression to a broader sense of social responsibility. These groups were found especially within the General Synod.

The most important man in these minority groups was Dr. J. H. W. Stuckenberg. C. H. Hopkins credited him with having created "the first, and one of few, significant American formulations of social theology, in comparison with which the writings of Ely, for example, seem almost childish."¹ Stuckenberg was born in Germany and immigrated to the States with his parents in 1839. In many respects, Stuckenberg's life resembles that of Washington Gladden, who was one year Stuckenberg's junior. Both grew up in pious farm homes. Both had minimal amounts of formal schooling in early youth, although both managed to do a good bit of reading. Both were employed in a trade school after leaving school, Gladden as a printer's helper and Stuckenberg as a delivery boy. Both quit their careers as manual laborers to enter college, Gladden to Williams and Stuckenberg to Wittenberg in Springfield, Ohio. Both became influenced by the new social ideas they encountered at college. Both developed a large number of friends among laymen. Both were interested in civic affairs, supported libraries, lectureships, and the YMCA. Both were sensitive to the new currents in thought and to the changes in society in which they lived. Ultimately they both met and became members of the same society, the Institute of Christian Sociology, of which Gladden was president and Stuckenberg vice president.²

Stuckenberg seems to have been restless and dissatisfied, willing to do new things. Between brief pastorates, he twice went abroad

¹Rise of Social Gospel, p. 111.

²The biographical references to Stuckenberg are taken from J. O. Evjen, The Life of J. H. W. Stuckenberg (Minneapolis, 1938).

to study in Germany where he was introduced to the new philosophical, scientific, and theological currents.¹ In 1868 Stuckenberg returned to America and began a five-year pastorate in Pittsburgh, the longest pastorate he held in America. His return came one year after the schism in the General Synod which resulted in the formation of the more conservative General Council. Stuckenberg elected to stay with the General Synod and made known his opposition to the victorious conservatives. While in Pittsburgh, he began his Sunday evening lectureship. At a time when Lutherans were withdrawing from inter-denominational contacts, Stuckenberg often preached in the Third Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, lectured frequently at the YMCA, and even received a call from a Presbyterian church in Indianapolis. It was at Pittsburgh also that he acquired his intimate acquaintance with the mills and factories. Several prominent mill owners were members of his congregation and they gave him unrestricted access to their properties.

By such practices, unconventional to the Lutheranism of the day, Stuckenberg openly declared war against the growing conservative trend of the times. He stood unbendingly outside the mainstream of the Lutheranism of his day and thereby ostracized himself from former friends and effective influence within the Lutheran communion. Perhaps the most important of all the disrupted relationships was that which now occurred between Stuckenberg and Passavant. Had these two men been able to blend their personalities, interests, and programs, the history of American Lutheranism likely would have been significantly different. Passavant, fifteen years older than Stuckenberg, was already a man of influence in the General Synod when Stuckenberg was ordained. Passavant had been

¹Evjen, The Life of Stuckenberg, pp. 82ff. At Göttingen, Stuckenberg studied under Ritschl and Lotze.

responsible for getting his junior colleague to serve as pastor of the English-speaking congregation in Erie, New York in 1863. During the confessional battle concerning "American Lutheranism," however, Passavant had sided with the conservatives and had later joined the General Council. Hence there developed a theological division between these two men with social concerns, and their interests were, unfortunately, not blended during this period of American Lutheran church history.

In 1873, Stuckenberg was called to be professor of Biblical Exegesis at Wittenberg College, but in addition he taught history, homiletics, symbolics, sociology, Greek, and Hebrew, for a grand total of twenty hours per week. While at Wittenberg, he became a good friend of Joseph Cook, who later invited him to lecture at Chautauqua. Stuckenberg's distinction as a scholar was apparently becoming more widely recognized. Wooster University awarded him an honorary doctorate in theology in 1875.

It was also at Wittenberg that Stuckenberg prepared the text for his Christian Sociology, published in 1880. It is this work which C. H. Hopkins has praised so highly. In it, Stuckenberg lamented that "the social element of the Gospel has been too much ignored, . . ." He went on to declare, however, that before the church could exert the kind of social influence one might expect from such an institution, it would have to develop a social science to form the basic principles by which this social concern was to operate.¹ Contrary to the prevailing Lutheran view, Stuckenberg boldly asserted that "Christianity is a mighty social power, and if left to work out its inherent nature it will es-

¹J. H. W. Stuckenberg, Christian Sociology (New York, 1880), pp. 6-7.

tablish Christian Society."¹ He thus identified himself with the social gospel movement in its broadest terms.

Yet Stuckenberg by no means simply espoused prevailing protestant views. For example, he differed from some social gospel leaders by arguing that the New Testament was to be the only source for materials in the study of Christian Sociology because in it, Stuckenberg believed, the true Christian ideal was presented. Stuckenberg, unlike some later social gospel leaders, also rejected the adaptation to Christianity of certain themes relating to evolution.² He argued instead that Christian society was a creation of Christ from whom emanates the power enabling such a society to come into being. Moreover, in contrast to some social gospel leaders, Stuckenberg had a high Christology. He argued that Christ was more than a teacher; he was the Word made flesh. He was a "theanthropic person," because "in him the fullness of the Godhead is manifested bodily."³ On the other hand, Stuckenberg held many ideas which were to become fairly common among social gospel leaders of the era. He gave a strong place in his theology to the doctrine of the kingdom of God. Of it he wrote:

The kingdom which he came to establish is a perfect union of believers. God is the founder of this kingdom, and it is a real theocracy; Jesus is the King, his followers are the subjects; God's will is the law of the realm; love is the controlling spirit of the citizens; life and death are the reward and punishment in this divine state.⁴

¹Stuckenberg, Christian Sociology (New York, 1880), p. 7.

²Ibid., pp. 37 and 68.

³Ibid., p. 78.

⁴Ibid., p. 92.

Such a statement sounds quite utopian,¹ but Stuckenberg did attempt to qualify this. He went on to explain that the kingdom of Christ was a spiritual one, not of this world. It differed from earthly kingdoms in principles, character, sin, and in the methods of promoting its ends. Nevertheless, while he formally held to the spiritual, other-worldly character of the kingdom, his dominant emphasis rested with this world. He argued that, because Christ's concern was for all that is human, his religion was as much a religion "for this earth" as it is for heaven, and that "its aim is, in fact, to establish a kingdom of heaven on earth."² In this manner, Stuckenberg attempted to hold together both the divine and earthly elements of the kingdom. By its nature, the kingdom was divine, spiritual, and different from the kingdoms of this world. Yet precisely this different, divine kingdom was intended for this world.

While Lutherans of his day accepted many of the things which he taught, they nevertheless objected to some emphases. One of these was his summary of the teachings of Jesus. These teachings were described by Stuckenberg in rather familiar social gospel terminology such as the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the worth and dignity of man, and the idea that love was to bind men to one another until death. Stuckenberg extricated himself somewhat from Lutheran criticism of his advocacy of the fatherhood-of-God thesis by explaining that all men were God's children according to nature, and that only those who loved

¹In fact, Stuckenberg even went so far as to say that government as a real theocracy would eventuate as soon as the truth of God was made "supreme in the hearts of men. When this is done, then everything else will follow." See Christian Sociology, p. 194.

²Ibid., p. 99.

and obeyed him were his children in any spiritual sense.¹

Another point at which Stuckenberg diverged from the general Lutheran view was with respect to self-love. Most Lutherans, on the one hand, saw all forms of self-love as the opposite of agape and hence denounced these expressions as sin. Stuckenberg, on the other hand, felt that enlightened self-love was not at all incompatible with Christian love. He argued that the propriety of self-love was so self-evident that the biblical writers did not consider it necessary to give special instruction on the subject. Christian self-love does not seek its own end at the expense of others, for this would be selfishness and was to be condemned. True self-love and self-interest were in harmony with love of others and with the interests of society, since a Christian does not love himself as an isolated being, but in connection with others. Hence self-love extends itself into the organism of which the self is a part. It is the measure one owes one's neighbor. This understanding, Stuckenberg felt, the golden rule made clear. The gospel does not want man to deprecate himself but to love his real worth. One cannot work on behalf of others without seeing the worth of one's own self, he argued. Self-love both produces good for society and is receptive to receiving good from society in return.²

Stuckenberg held this view consistently. It appeared again in his major work published in 1903:

Altruism . . . considers the claims of others as well as personal rights. It does not involve the abandonment of any legitimate right of the individual or association . . . but it does imply that the individual and society are to recognize social duties, that to others be accorded what is demanded for self, and that in

¹Stuckenberg, Christian Sociology, pp. 101 and 117.

²Ibid., pp. 240ff.

promoting personal and social interests, the claims of others be respected.¹

On occasion Stuckenberg could write passionately of the need for the church to move into the world in order to win the worldly. In 1893 he wrote:

Unread creeds, unbelieved dogmas, mechanical forms, lying names, antiquated phraseology, hypocritical cant, an apostolical succession without the apostolic spirit, hierarchical pretensions of a clerical pharisaism, a sacramentalism which puts the symbols of grace for grace, and rites which have body without soul, cannot do the work required. Those attached to such things may be the hardest to regenerate. He who feels the demands of the crisis may have to sever himself from them, or at least leave them behind. Resolutely the living must forsake the graveyards and go to living fields; otherwise they are doomed to death and burial.²

He called on the church to examine itself, repent, and acquire a new spirit. He asked the church especially to master what he termed the sociological teachings of the New Testament which, he maintained, the church had largely ignored. These teachings were to be embodied in society so that personality would become exalted above things. He challenged the church to study socialism impartially, to offer courses in it at its colleges and seminaries. The church, he said, must be love in action, investigating the causes of suffering and removing them. Hostility to the laborer must be overcome in the church, he argued, as he urged Christians to form Christian associations where capitalist and laborer could meet on brotherly terms.³

Concern for the laborer was one of his special interests. In possessing this concern, Stuckenberg was not only ahead of most Lutheran

¹J. H. W. Stuckenberg, Sociology, the Science of Human Society, II (New York, 1903), p. 258.

²J. H. W. Stuckenberg, The Age and the Church (Hartford, 1893), p. 304.

³Ibid., pp. 308-320.

clergymen but of most protestant clergy as well.¹ In The Social Problem, Stuckenberg contended that labor ought to receive a full reward for its toil, without having to organize. So long, however, as such conditions did not obtain, he argued that the laborer had not only the right but also the duty to organize. He even went so far as to give his approval to strikes, although he viewed them only as a last resort and said violence in connection with them was to be abhorred. To prevent strikes, he advocated a position similar to that of Gladden by calling on both capital and labor to work according to their mutual self-interest. He preferred conciliation and arbitration to strikes. Despite his concern for the laboring man, however, Stuckenberg was not oblivious to potential dangers residing in labor's new-found powers. He displayed a genuine farsightedness by insisting that when society granted rights to labor organizations, society ought to protect its own rights against the wrongs which a strong labor force could inflict on it.

In spite of his intent to summon the church to action, Stuckenberg was largely ignored by all protestant churches, including the Lutheran. This may be due not only to the views he represented, but also to his personality and his actions. He apparently lacked the passion for social reform that was expressed by a Rauschenbusch or even a Passavant. This was coupled with the fact that he lacked the public relations flare of a Gladden who deftly called public attention to his views. In addition, Stuckenberg removed himself from the American scene for long periods of time to study, work, and write in Germany. While in Berlin, he had found himself in the midst of a delightful social circle including such persons as the American Ambassador to Germany, Andrew White. Frequent-

¹See Aaron I. Abell, The Urban Impact of American Protestantism, 1865-1900 (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 63-66.

ly Stuckenberg was called upon to give and respond to toasts at diplomatic receptions sponsored by the American legation. From his writings and his service to an American congregation in Berlin, he was able to obtain sufficient income to allow him this comfortable life of study and social encounter. All this was undoubtedly preferable to the life of an underpaid and overworked professor at an obscure college in Ohio. He himself had said that a life lived in love for others was in no way inconsistent with enlightened self-love. In any event, despite apparently repeated offers from Wittenberg and other institutions that he return to America, Stuckenberg remained aloof from the American scene from 1880 until 1892, writing, collecting maps and antiques, preaching, and socializing in Germany.¹ As one historian has expressed it, "at the very time his influence was needed the most to lead and strengthen an element in the General Synod advocating social action, he stood aloof."² Perhaps the heated passion necessary to light the flame of social reform was stillborn in the study, deprived of the stimulation resulting from daily confrontation by the tragedies of a hell's kitchen.

Stuckenberg himself felt unwanted, even in the General Synod. As he wrote to the president of the East Pennsylvania Synod in 1902,

I cherish no delusions respecting my position. My isolation is not due to location but to my specialty. I am trying to save Sociology from its materialistic and agnostic basis, and am told that I am not

¹Stuckenberg's biographer suggests that illness was an important reason for Stuckenberg's decision to leave Wittenberg in 1880. A heresy trial at Wittenberg of one of the professors also dampened Stuckenberg's enthusiasm for returning to his alma mater for further teaching. One can only conjecture that he lacked the passion to stay in the fight. It is also unclear as to whether Stuckenberg actually received many concrete offers to return. His biographer refers to several, but he is so uncritical of his materials that the possibility exists that Evjen has simply handed down unexamined rumor. See Evjen, Stuckenberg, pp. 211ff., 222ff., 252ff., 270ff., 344ff., and 372ff.

²Lentz, "History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 95.

doing the work of the church. I am trying to promote the Christian social movement in the spirit of Christ, and according to the teachings of the New Testament, and I am told that I am not doing the work of the church. I am fighting revolutionary socialism and anarchism, and am denounced as a socialist. Other denominations open their churches and their institutions and heartily welcome me. One of my books will soon appear in Rome, in Italian. But my own church is closed to me because I am not doing its work.¹

Despite the fact that his work was largely ignored, Stuckenberg has been hailed as one who made a significant contribution to the development of a Christian social science. C. H. Hopkins has made the judgment that

Stuckenberg's most unique and prophetic note was his insistence that the teachings of Christ are adaptable to all the needs of men, in which viewpoint he antedated by two decades the adoption of the social teachings² of Jesus as the religious basis for a maturing social gospel.

Stuckenberg, however, was not the only person to express a social concern in the General Synod during this era. It is not correct to say that the General Synod became a leader in the social gospel movement, but it is set apart from other Lutheran groups because it displayed a more sympathetic interest in, and a greater openness to the social gospel than did the other Lutherans. To be sure, Lutherans in the General Synod also gave expression to their theological opposition to the social gospel along the lines indicated earlier.³ Nevertheless, one finds among this group a new stirring of the social conscience which helped pave the way for a broader development later.

According to Dr. Lentz, General Synod interest in the new social movement is reflected chiefly in articles, speeches, and occasionally in

¹J. H. W. Stuckenberg, quoted in Evjen, Stuckenberg, p. 456.

²Rise of Social Gospel, p. 112.

³See supra, pp. 15ff.

resolutions. Articles appeared in the General Synod publications during the last part of the nineteenth century on a fairly large number of subjects. Lentz has catalogued the items as including a call for the safeguarding of labor from the explosion of steam boilers, the debasing of currency, food adulteration, short weights, political corruption, the relations of church and state, wages for laborers, the abuses of wealth, the unequal distribution of wealth, a call for the repeal of legislation favoring monopolies, Christian socialism, strikes, the Knights of Labor, liquor, Sabbath breaking, marriage and divorce laws, workmen's insurance, prison reform, the life of children in the slums, child life in factories, and housing for the poor. Despite an interest in these subjects, however, Lentz has concluded that Lutheran concern prior to the turn of the century was verbal rather than active. He writes:

the last decade of the nineteenth century appears to have been one of strong Lutheran support and sympathy for the Social Gospel, commendation of its leaders, vindication of them when they were attacked, and genuine interest in their work. Yet Lutheran support was almost wholly verbal. It commended, but did not itself become active in similar work.¹

As the twentieth century dawned and the emphasis within the social gospel movement shifted to the teachings of Jesus, Lutherans felt a more compatible interest in the protestant social development. In fact, the first decade of the new century may be labeled as the high point in social gospel interest in the General Synod. An editorial in the Observer was optimistic enough to make the following judgment:

It would not be strange indeed, if the passing years did not witness a moral improvement in the corporate life of the community, a higher ethical tone, greater sensitiveness to existing evils,

¹"History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 178.

more emphatic reprobation of wrong doers. The advance, of course, is not equal in all directions. Along with the progression there is even retrogression at points. But that the general movement is forward, not backward, is clear when periods of considerable length are compared.¹

Early twentieth century interest in the social question is also reflected by the fact that the General Synod joined the Federal Council of Churches at the organizational meeting. It was the only Lutheran body to do so. Three members of the synod held FCC offices. The Rev. J. B. Remensnyder was chairman of the FCC Commission on Peace and Arbitration, while the Rev. E. H. Delk and A. J. Turkle served with Gladden and others on the Commission on Church and Social Service.

In 1911 the Rev. Harlan K. Fenner was installed as president of the General Synod. In his installation address he said that conditions of the day called for "that Son of Man who could apply himself to human environments and economic needs." Lentz says this speech by the highest elected official of the synod marks the high water mark of the social gospel in that body.²

Among the constituent synods of the General Synod, only the Pittsburgh Synod, existing in the midst of acute industrial problems, took a somewhat aggressive position on some issues, especially labor.³ Other synods took only occasional action on just a few items. In 1889, for example, the Nebraska Synod considered the issue of gambling; the Pittsburgh Synod studied prison reform; the Miami, Iowa, and Northern Illinois Synods acted on Sabbath observance; and the Northern Indiana

¹Quoted in Lentz, "History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 188.

²Lentz, ibid., pp. 252-253.

³See Wentz, Lutheranism in America, p. 332. See also Lentz, "History of Social Gospel in General Synod," pp. 118 and 257.

Synod considered the question of temperance. Resolutions appeared in other years with respect to race prejudice,¹ white slave traffic, divorce, and labor. Lentz has concluded, however, that widespread concern existed only with respect to two issues, labor and temperance.²

As early as 1868 the General Synod labelled intemperance "the most wide-spread and most destructive" of the moral evils cursing the country.³ Thus the synod reflected what Paul Carter has described as a liberal tendency within theological circles during the early prohibition movement.⁴ By 1907 the synod not only voted to express themselves as strongly favoring prohibition, but they also voted to "demand such legislation by the National government in the interest of a proper comity and of fair play with the States."⁵

On another social gospel item of concern, namely labor, the General Synod Lutherans did not provide support, with the exception of the Pittsburgh Synod. Dr. Lentz has made the judgment that the General Synod "recognized the right of labor to organize but was opposed to strikes and branded nearly all forms of violence as anarchism . . . the heads of labor groups were considered generally radical, selfish and untrustworthy." As strikes grew in number and in violence, the General Synod displayed a reduced sympathy for labor. With respect to other

¹At the 1911 convention, the General Synod petitioned President Taft to call an international conference to consider protection of the Jew in Rumania and to consider the situation of Arminians in Turkey. General Synod, Proceedings (1911), pp. 136-137.

²"History of Social Gospel in General Synod," p. 149.

³General Synod, Proceedings (1868), p. 27.

⁴Paul A. Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel: Social and Political Liberalism in American Churches, 1920-1940 (Ithaca, 1954), pp. 32ff.

⁵General Synod, Proceedings (1907), p. 90. (Italics mine.)

labor questions, even less interest was shown. Lentz says that little attention was paid to such labor problems as long working hours, employment of women, sweat shops, and industrial hazards. They were rarely discussed in church papers and never considered in synod conventions--not even the question of child labor.

All that was written or done about the subject of working conditions in the factories and elsewhere on the part of the General Synod could be quoted in full on a few pages.¹ The topic simply was not discussed to any degree worth noting.

When World War I broke out, some of the synods adopted resolutions deploring the war. Some expressed hope for peace while others sought to take the United States out of the conflict. The General Synod voted to denounce as "unchristian and inhumane" the manufacture and export of war munitions to the warring nations, declaring that "we, as American Christian citizens, hereby solemnly disclaim before God any willing assent on our part or willing participation in such shameful commercialism."² When the United States became involved in the actual conflict, however, the General Synod passed a resolution commending the President, the army, and the navy to God and pledging its unswerving loyalty to the United States government.³

The emerging social concern of the General Synod was slightly impeded during the second decade of the twentieth century by the more dominant question of Lutheran merger. In 1918 the General Synod merged with the General Council and the United Synod of the South to form the United Lutheran Church in America. This merger was significant because

¹"History of Social Gospel in General Synod," pp. 181, 303, and 320.

²General Synod, Proceedings (1915), pp. 197 and 199.

³Ibid., (1917), p. 165.

it represented the first reunion of major groups divided at the time of the Civil War. Perhaps the lower priority which Lutherans placed on social issues helped make the merger possible. In any event, the kind of social concern which had been developing slowly within the General Synod for nearly four decades, now flowed into and helped find a broader expression in the ULCA.¹

The ULCA at the time of its formation was considerably Americanized, a process stimulated by World War I. She was much more urban and eastern than the other Lutheran groups. Approximately 40 per cent of the ULCA membership in 1918 resided in Pennsylvania and 20 per cent in New York and adjacent states.

At the very first ULCA convention, therefore, one finds something quite uncharacteristic for Lutheran churches of that era, namely a declaration concerning the moral and religious issues of the day, totalling more than a dozen points.² After thanking God for the allied victory and rejoicing in the prospect of a just peace, the statement went on to endorse a world organization equipped with power to preserve peace and to halt aggression. Meeting during the week in which the armistice was signed, the ULCA said that "we consider it especially in consonance with the Gospel, that the weak and small nations shall be given free, full and unhampered opportunity to develop their own national life." The statement continued:

¹The most comprehensive study of the ULCA and its attitude toward social issues during the early period of this church's history has been done by Dr. Harold Haas. See Haas, "The Social Thinking of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1918-1948" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Drew University, 1953).

²United Lutheran Church in America, Minutes (Philadelphia, 1918), pp. 9-10.

we deem it unchristian to seek national aggrandizement, to satisfy greed for expansion and the extension of unbridled commercialism by securing colonies and markets in other lands unjustly and to the detriment of less civilized peoples who are thereby exploited and hindered in their efforts to reach higher standards of life.¹

The statement went on to say that mercy must temper justice in the relations between nations.

Thus from the very beginning, the ULCA acted in the social arena and it was henceforth taken for granted that she would. While she decided against joining the Federal Council of Churches even though the General Synod had been a charter member, the ULCA nevertheless did adopt a resolution expressing gratitude to the council for its work during the war. The spirit of the ULCA with respect to social responsibility thus seems to have been different from other Lutheran churches from the moment of its inception.

The emerging social consciousness found new expression at the 1920 ULCA convention. Upon the recommendation of the temperance committee, the convention voted to establish a Committee on Moral and Social Welfare which was to provide "a thorough study of moral, social and industrial problems, . . ."² This action proved to be highly significant because the work done by this committee and its successor proved to be one of the most important influences in stimulating a growing social concern within the ULCA. In taking this step, the ULCA was nearly two decades ahead of its sister Lutheran churches.

Interest in the question of war and peace continued to run rather strongly. A 1922 resolution called for a reduction in armaments to a

¹ULCA, Minutes (1918), pp. 9-10.

²Ibid. (1920), p. 479.

peace-time basis, or to that required only for the preservation of order.¹ At the following biennial convention, this issue was given further attention and evoked considerable debate. The convention acted to affirm that

to declare unequivocally that "war is sin" is to declare that the powers that declare war are not ordained of God and have acted against conscience in their declaration. . . . We believe we are morally bound to prevent war. . . . A World Court and other legal agencies are crutches which are needed to sustain the patient. The Christ alone can bid the patient discard the crutches.²

While there were no ULCA resolutions affirming the idea of created orders of society, this idea was nevertheless the theological motivation for the resolution adopted. The convention thus gave expression to a curious contradiction that frequently appeared in Lutheran statements at that time. On the one hand, most Lutherans affirmed a rather pessimistic view of man with a strong emphasis on his depravity. On the other hand, many Lutherans could not quite bring themselves to accuse the state of sin, as the resolution illustrates. The adopted statement implies that one cannot accuse the state of sin because God created and ordained it. By similar reasoning, however, one could not accuse the home of sin because it, too, was supposed to be a part of God's created orders. Yet the prayers of the church are full of confessions embodying just such contrite affirmations.

The convention went on to say that, when attacked, "Christians may engage in just war and act as soldiers."³ This was a familiar

¹ULCA, Minutes (1922), p. 420.

²Ibid. (1924), p. 266.

³Ibid., pp. 275 and 276.

Lutheran stance.¹ A group of clergymen, however, headed by the Rev. Paul Scherer, recorded their dissent from the convention action, contending that "at the present time we should avoid all reference to the right of war, . . ."² Four years later, in 1928, the Rev. Mr. Scherer introduced a resolution instructing the ULCA Parish and Church School Board to introduce into the church school curricula material concerning the cultivation of peace among nations. The motion was referred to the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare, which had recommended establishment of a youth educational program in the area of social responsibility.³

The ULCA in its first decade also expressed concern in a preliminary way about a few other social issues, but the attention given them was only minor.⁴

So far as other Lutheran bodies during this period was concerned, social interest was generally confined to the traditional items of welfare and relief, as historians of these bodies have observed.⁵ The Augustana Lutherans were beginning to express an awareness of other issues. At this time, however, the views expressed were generally in opposition to the prevailing opinions in the major parts of the remainder of protestantism as a few typical examples will illustrate.

¹In 1924, for example, the Lutheran stated that the church could not judge concerning the declaration of a war, because this invaded the prerogatives of the state. See "On the Separation of Church and State," Lutheran, August 21, 1924, p. 74.

²ULCA, Minutes (1924), p. 488.

³Ibid. (1928), pp. 580, 582, and 595.

⁴In 1922, for example, the ULCA called for arbitration of industrial disputes. They also adopted a resolution supporting the enforcement of prohibition. See ULCA, Minutes (1922), pp. 415 and 422.

⁵See supra, pp. 6-7 and 26ff.

Writing in a 1924 Augustana Quarterly, Leonard Kendall, who later was to become president of the Augustana Minnesota Conference, denounced H. E. Fosdick as a heretic writing from a defective Christian experience.¹ Two years later, Dr. P. O. Bersell, who shortly thereafter was named president of the Augustana Church, leveled his guns at Reinhold Niebuhr, modernism, biblical criticism, and science, in almost the same breath.² In 1927, the Rev. Emil Chinlund, superintendent of the Lutheran Deaconess Institute in Omaha, Nebraska, attacked Rauschenbusch in an article he entitled, "Christian Mercy as Distinguished from Humanitarian Altruism." On the one hand, Chinlund agreed that

the social agitation of Rauschenbusch . . . is amply justified in the face of the many flagrant injustices and handicaps which still exist. . . . Child labor, unwholesome factory conditions, uninspected food supplies, unhygienic and unsanitary conditions, unguarded exposure to machinery, not to speak of the incessant agitation of labor and capital, . . .³

But on the other hand, in response to the question whether the church ought to enter the industrial, economic, social, and political arenas, Chinlund replied in the negative. Repeating the expression that Lutherans were not indifferent to questions of human welfare, he nevertheless argued that

we maintain that its [the church's] peculiar and specific work in the world is the proclamation of the Gospel of redemption through Jesus Christ. . . . The church performs the biggest work and renders

¹"Fosdick's Re-Phrasing of Scriptural Truth, Will It Hold?", Augustana Quarterly, III (December, 1924), pp. 317-327.

²"Dangers From Without That Threaten the Church," ibid., V (June, 1926), pp. 97-110.

³"Christian Mercy as Distinguished from Humanitarian Altruism," ibid., VI (December, 1927), p. 323.

mankind the largest measure of service possible when it adheres strictly to its divine call to declare the full counsel of God concerning man's salvation, preaches in the full the Law and Gospel, and administers the divinely instituted sacraments . . . as the individual is regenerated, society will in turn be benefited thereby.¹

Chinlund therefore went on to criticize Rauschenbusch in terms reminiscent of earlier critiques expressed in the General Synod. He argued that Rauschenbusch did not take depravity seriously and contended that the cure of society would not come via the social gospel movement. He listed, as follows, four alleged errors of the social gospel:

- 1) The social gospel was said to confuse regeneration with social reform, and to be blind to the fact that regeneration must precede moral improvement.
- 2) The social gospel was said to err in making the sins of society rather than personal sins, the object of evangelism.
- 3) The social gospel was said to misconstrue the function of the church by making its program one of social reform.
- 4) The social gospel was said to undervalue the power of the state to right its own wrongs.

Chinlund's statement again illustrates the lack of clarity in the Lutheran position. On the one hand, he emphasized the depravity of man. On the other hand, taking his departure from the doctrine of creation, Chinlund accused the social gospel leaders of underestimating the power of the state to right its own wrongs and said that "all questions pertaining to politics and to social improvements are matters which are to be determined by a sane use of the natural powers of reason, of

¹Chinlund, Augustana Quarterly, VI (December, 1927), pp. 323-325.

free choice and determination."¹

Nevertheless, despite attacks on protestants reflecting a broader social concern, some movements toward a new stance are observable in Augustana in the post World War I era.

In 1924, for example, the pages of the Augustana Quarterly were opened to an eloquent plea to abandon war because it was said to be out of harmony with the teaching of Jesus. The author went so far as to say that one could not be a Christian if he believed in, and practiced war.

When the Lord says to me, "thou shalt not kill," I take that to mean that we have no right to go out and slaughter our fellow human beings. When He says, "love your enemies," I take that to mean that we must love not only our neighbors and friends and countrymen, but also the Germans and Russians, though an insane world has brushed them aside as scum of the earth.²

The pacifist theme was to continue to grow within Augustana until it reached a fairly influential position during the 1930's. At the beginning, however, the pleas were fairly isolated.

The other Lutheran bodies under observation, namely the Norwegian Lutheran Church and the forerunners of the American Lutheran Church, retained the traditional stance.³

¹Chinlund, Augustana Quarterly, VI (December, 1927), pp. 323-327.

²Lehman Wendell, "To Those Who Defend War on Scriptural Grounds," ibid., III (March, 1924), p. 85.

³The rigid wall of separation between church and state did, in fact, break down on occasion when an issue arose which the church considered "moral." In 1925, for example, the president of the Norwegian Lutheran Church sent "An Appeal to the People of Minnesota." The article exhorted citizens to write the state legislators urging them to pass a bill prohibiting Sunday movies. The pastoral conferences of both the Northern and Southern Minnesota districts of the NLCA had adopted resolutions expressing the same intent. H. G. Stub, NLCA president, had some difficulty walking the tight rope of absolute separation of church and state in defending his action. He wrote that "now as always, the Lutheran

When one considers the sixty-year period prior to 1930, therefore, one finds that American Lutheranism did not join that portion of American protestantism which was calling vigorously for social reform in the name of religion. There was a slight interest, first in the General Synod, later in the United Lutheran Church, and, less markedly, in the Augustana Church on the subject of war. But for the most part, American Lutherans during this period expressed their social concern in terms of charity toward the needy. They did not yet regard their responsibility as extending to broader areas of social concern. Thus, if by nothing but silent acceptance, they tended to underwrite the economic, social, and political status quo. The next decade, however, would witness some significant departures from this traditional stance.

Church holds strictly to the separation of Church and State, both of which are divine institutions and have their special sphere of action. However, the Church of Christ has the supreme call to propagate the fundamental principles of truth and righteousness individually and in the community. The Church does not presume to dictate to legislatures, but it must endeavor in all great issues essentially moral, to create such public opinion as shall bring moral pressure to bear upon State Legislatures to enact just such bills as Bill No. 418 now under consideration." He continued by saying: "Do not delay, but please sit down immediately and write to your representatives urging them to stand together for the Bill." See H. G. Stub, "An Appeal to the People of Minnesota," Lutheran Church Herald, February 17, 1925, p. 203.

PART I

A DEVELOPING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

IN EMBRYONIC FORM: 1930 - 1944

Introduction

The new trend among American Lutherans with respect to social responsibility began to exert significant influence only after World War II. Prior to that time, the older, quietistic attitude dominated, although it was challenged even in the 1930's. Donald B. Meyer, in his recent study, has correctly observed that "Lutheranism as a whole, and not merely Missouri Synod Lutheranism, persisted in its historic reluctance to engage upon affairs of the state and the world and until late in the 'thirties gave no leaders to the cause."¹

World events, revolutionary in impact, appear to have been the chief catalysts in the emergence of new positions concerning the church's role in society. The two chief events seem to have been the economic depression of the early 1930's and World War II. The dilemma in which people found themselves by virtue of these events weighed heavily on the churches as their leaders attempted to interpret and give meaning to the contemporary scene.

Ernst Troeltsch once wrote that "Lutheranism is inclined to endure existing conditions humbly and patiently, even when they are bad,

¹The Protestant Search for Political Realism, 1919-1941
(Berkeley, 1961), p. 45.

and to glorify them when they agree with those earlier ideals."¹ This characterization was aptly illustrated as Lutherans attempted to deal with the horror of a depression, compounded by a drought which covered vast areas populated by members of their rural churches. It appears, however, that an appeal to divine providence and human patience did not adequately satisfy people caught in the more cruel tragedies of the day. Thus as the lingering problems of the depression merged with those associated with an approaching war, Lutherans began to cast about for a new stance and to break a few traditions concerning the function of the church in society. Each of the four churches under study reacted differently. Hence each of them ought to be seen separately.

Two inter-Lutheran agencies--to which some of the churches being studied belonged--existed during this period. These agencies were the National Lutheran Council and the American Lutheran Conference.² Both agencies reflected the appearance of new social concerns within the member churches although neither agency seems to have influenced the churches substantially toward moving in these new directions during this era.

The National Lutheran Council was organized in 1918 after efforts to minister jointly to World War I armed forces had proven cooperation

¹Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, II, trans. Olive Wyon (New York, 1960), p. 573.

²Another group of cooperating Lutherans involving people from the four churches studied was the Lutheran Student Association of America. During this period, however, its chief interests seem to have been world missions and evangelism. The only social action item to arouse interest involved an expressed concern for the rights and protection of conscientious objectors. See Minutes of Lutheran Student Association of America, Council Meeting, August 21-27, 1939, p. 6; and August 22-30, 1940, pp. 21-25 (in Chicago office of Division of College and University Work, the NLC).

among American Lutherans was feasible.¹ The first post-war effort focused on a major European relief program.² Work ultimately developed in other fields, such as home missions and welfare. In January, 1933, upon recommendation of its executive director, Dr. Ralph Long, the council established a Committee on Social Trends. Speaking of "the present situation of employment and distress" and of the "changing order in things political, economic, domestic and social," Dr. Long said it was "imperative" that the church study the new situations.³ In view of the Hopkins-May thesis, it is significant to note the social rather than theological reasons cited by Long to underscore the need for such action. When the time arrived for organizing the social trends committee in August, 1933, Dr. Long asked for position papers on such familiar topics as family, marriage, divorce, leisure time, amusements, drinking, gambling, crime, and finally, unemployment.⁴ The list suggests that the council was not pushing ahead sharply. When the NLC met for its annual meeting in

¹A history of the National Lutheran Council is in the process of being compiled by Dr. Frederick Wentz of Gettysburg Seminary.

²For a comprehensive treatment of this activity, see Richard W. Solberg, As Between Brothers (Minneapolis, 1957).

³Proceedings of the National Lutheran Council, January 18-19, 1933, pp. 34-35, 23, and 13 (in NLC archives). There are pagination problems in connection with the minutes of the National Lutheran Council. Not all copies of the minutes are numbered identically. This is true both of the typed copies and the mimeographed ones. Sometimes the latter were re-done on different typewriters and the spacing is thus different. In addition, the pagination of the microfilm copy does not always agree with that of the officially bound volumes. Unless otherwise mentioned, page references in this thesis are to those of the bound volumes of minutes in the NLC archives. The bound volumes cover the years from 1930 to 1942. After 1942, the page references are from the minutes and agendas in the loose leaf notebooks which comprise the official record of minutes in the NLC archives.

⁴Minutes of Committee on Social Trends, National Lutheran Council, August 29, 1933, pp. 1-3 (in NLC archives).

1934, the council granted permission to its social trends committee to publish any of its papers, with the understanding that none of the statements had received council approval.¹

During the entire period, the council approved four statements. One opposed the liquor industry.² One called for "cleaner" motion pictures, and one said the church was opposed to causes of war.³ Another, issued after the outbreak of World War II, encouraged all Christians to pray for peace and said that "the bitterness of war must not sever the bonds by which Christians everywhere are bound." Pointing out that Lutheran churches in America drew their memberships from many nationalities, the statement went on to declare that

. . . particularly in this hour of crisis, we Lutherans in America must never permit our judgments to be colored or distorted by our nationalistic origins. Wherever we were born, we are now Americans. The protection of the State is given us here, and here our loyalties are due.

The statement appealed to Americans not to exploit the war for profit nor to become entangled in propaganda of hatred, and went on to endorse a national policy of neutrality.⁴

¹Before the council adjourned, however, a negative statement about the liquor industry was released to the press. It was apparently the only issue on which the councilors felt they could speak with a fair amount of unanimity. See Proceedings of the NLC, January 18-19, 1934, pp. 12-14 and 19.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., January 17-18, 1935, report of executive director, pp. 1 and 2; and Proceedings, pp. 8-9 and 34.

⁴Ibid., 1940, pp. 10-11. For a further elaboration of this statement, see ibid., 1941, pp. 71-72. The NLC did not endorse the stance of conscientious objectors, although efforts were made to support them. At the March 3, 1941 meeting of the NLC executive committee, the NLC received a petition from the ULCA Board of Social Missions asking the Council for financial assistance to conscientious objectors. The committee voted that this issue was the function of the individual

At the very meeting in 1940 when the NLC adopted its longest statement on war, the council sounded the death knell for the Committee on Social Trends. Upon the recommendation of Dr. Long, the social trends committee was made a part of the new Department of Welfare. During the ensuing year, the department operated with two sub-committees, one dealing with social trends and the other with social welfare. In 1941 the final blow was struck. Upon the recommendation of both Dr. Long and Dr. C. E. Krumbholz, executive secretary for the Department of Welfare, the council voted to merge the social trends and social welfare committees into one to avoid overlapping.¹ The result was the immediate domination in the committee by concerns for welfare. The work of the social trends committee was to lie dormant until several years after World War II.

One can say, therefore, that the establishment of the social trends committee by the NLC did reflect a movement toward greater social responsibility within the member churches. The committee, however, did not lead the churches and ultimately it died. Aside from four statements, all fairly conservative in character, the NLC endorsed nothing during

churches. At the following annual meeting, early in 1942, the NLC did vote to petition the U. S. government "to utilize the services of conscientious objectors in some form of useful non-military national project, and in view of such service provide them with their sustenance." The following year the council voted to urge the participating bodies to provide adequate pastoral care and religious literature to objectors in public service camps, and where this was not feasible, to refer the cases to the NLC. See, NLC Executive Committee Minutes, March 3, 1941, p. 5; Proceedings, NLC, 1942, p. 177 (cf. stamped pagination in lower left-hand corner); and 1943, p. 48 of Agenda and p. 11 of Annual Minutes.

¹Proceedings, NLC, 1940, pp. 15 and 48; and 1941, pp. 33-34 and 49-51.

this period.¹ Both the ULCA and Augustana were considerably ahead of the NLC in position papers which the two churches adopted. The ELC seems to have ignored the social trends committee quite effectively. The ALC leadership may have been influenced by discussions within the council but there is no tangible evidence to support the suggestion. Thus, while social concern surfaced within the NLC during this period, that concern did not become a dominant one in the council, nor did the council give the new movement significant direction. Ultimately other issues forced social action into the worst of all possible positions in a burgeoning organization: off the agenda.

Similarly, it appears that the American Lutheran Conference reflected a movement toward greater social responsibility during this period, although the organization did not succeed in moving into the front line. The conference was formed in 1930 and undertook limited cooperative efforts, chiefly in student work. The conference lacked both the stature and the scope of the NLC. The ULCA was not a member.² As with the NLC, Augustana took positions in advance of the conference and seems to have been the driving force within the conference before World War II. Likewise, the ELC seems to have ignored the conference as it did the NLC. Again, as with the NLC, leaders in the ALC may have been influenced but

¹Minutes of Committee on Social Trends, NLC, February 18, 1935, pp. 1-2; and November 13, 1935, pp. 1-2. See also Proceedings, NLC, January 22-23, 1936, pp. 8, 13-14, and Exhibit III, items 1-4; 1937, pp. 13-14ff; 1938, pp. 17 and 45-48; and 1939, pp. 12-15, 35-48, and 52-53.

²It is sometimes suggested that the American Lutheran Conference was organized as a defensive league against the ULCA. See, for example, the minutes of the Conference of Representatives of Lutheran Synods in the Middlewest, dated "October 8, 1929 or after," and marked "private" (in NLC archives). See also Wentz, Lutheranism in America, pp. 320ff; Nelson, The Lutheran Church among Norwegian Americans, II, pp. 303ff; and Meuser, The Formation of the ALC, pp. 236ff.

there are few statements or actions to verify this contention until after World War II.

As the result of urging by men from Augustana, delegates to the 1934 biennial meeting of the conference voted to establish a Commission on Social Relations "to study the relation of the Church to present day problems and to present its findings from time to time, to the end that the American Lutheran Conference may speak the mind of the Church on the questions of the day."¹

Commission efforts met resistance. An attempt at the 1936 convention to gain approval of a statement entitled "Sociological Principles According to Scriptural Teachings and Lutheran Conceptions" failed.² A further obstacle was presented when the conference executive committee voted at its December 6, 1937 meeting to recommend to the next biennial convention that the Commission on Social Relations be consolidated with the Committee on Social Trends of the National Lutheran Council.³ In referring this recommendation to the 1938 convention, the conference president, Dr. T. F. Gullixson, president of Luther Seminary

¹See Minutes, American Lutheran Conference, 1934, p. 15 (in NLC archives); and the officially printed conference minutes in Journal of the American Lutheran Conference, II (March, 1937), pp. 70-71. The action followed an address by A. D. Mattson, professor at Augustana Seminary, on the topic, "The Kingdom of God and the Social Order." In a letter to Dr. P. O. Bersell, secretary of the conference, and future Augustana president, Dr. Mattson wrote: "You suggested that I present the matter in such a manner that discussion might be provoked. Well, I think I have done so." Letter from A. D. Mattson, professor of ethics at Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois, November 8, 1934 (in NLC archives).

²Journal of the American Lutheran Conference, II (March, 1937), p. 90. See also letter of Dr. B. M. Christensen to Professor G. M. Bruce, December 7, 1936 (in NLC archives).

³Minutes, Executive Committee of the American Lutheran Conference, December 6, 1937, p. 5 (in NLC archives).

in St. Paul, said that the action had been taken, not because of lack of appreciation, but in order to avoid overlapping in personnel and duplication of effort. The conference commission fought back successfully to preserve its life and the executive committee action was defeated.¹

At the 1938 convention, the conference did adopt its first statement about social issues, namely one concerning labor-management relations.² This action, however, reflected the work of Dr. A. D. Mattson of Augustana and was paralleled in that church. A paragraph in the social relations commission report had said that labor leaders often spoke of a lack of understanding on the part of the church toward the labor movement and that the church ought to examine itself at this point. This paragraph was eliminated from the report by action of the Conference Preliminary Committee, a group which met prior to the biennial convention to screen conference business and reports.³

¹Minutes, American Lutheran Conference, Journal of the American Lutheran Conference, IV (July, 1939), pp. 57 and 72. Certain questions are raised by this action. For example, there were other areas in which there was also overlapping between the conference and the NLC but no action was yet proposed to dissolve those. The initial conference commission had on its membership two men who were also a part of the NLC committee. These were Dr. Martin Anderson and Dr. G. M. Bruce. This kind of limited duplication did continue. A letter in the NLC archives from Dr. G. M. Bruce to the Rev. L. M. Stavig, conference secretary, however, does suggest dissatisfaction on the part of the social relations committee with the manner in which synodical leaders "mutilated" the committee's work before submitting it to the convention for action. One might therefore surmise that the action to transfer the commission's work to the NLC represented an attempt by synodical leaders to exercise greater control. The NLC annual meeting was much smaller and much more easily ecclesiastically controlled than the conference convention. Data for this judgment, however, is not sufficiently strong to make it more than a conjecture.

²Ibid., p. 73.

³Report of the Preliminary Committee of the Fourth Biennial Convention of the American Lutheran Conference, November 8, 1938, pp. 1 and 4 (in NLC archives).

A part of the statement involved the endorsement of a portion of the Oxford Life and Work report on "The Church and the Economic Order." That report had referred to the "intrinsic worth and dignity" of labor and had said that "the workingman, whether in field or factory, is entitled to a living wage, wholesome surroundings and a recognized voice in the decisions which affect his welfare as a worker." The Preliminary Committee, reflecting rural considerations, had voted to strike the words "whether in field or factory" and the amended form was approved by the conference.¹

The statement also endorsed certain economic practices which had earlier gained the support of other church groups. These practices included the rights of employee and employer to organize for collective bargaining, the safeguarding of working conditions, a qualified abolition of child labor, and insurance against sickness, accident, old age, and unemployment. Approval was also given for a minimum six-day work week and regulated working conditions for women. Both the worker and the employer were exhorted to be concerned about what was termed "the public good."²

Despite these limited undertakings, work of the commission came under fire. At the 1940 conference convention, the Rev. Theodore Pretzlaff of Toledo, Ohio, a member of the social relations commission, addressed the delegates concerning the commission's objectives. He denied that the commission sought to impose an ecclesiastical rule on

¹See Report of the Preliminary Committee of the Fourth Biennial Convention of the American Lutheran Conference, November 8, 1938, p. 4 (in NLC archives), as well as the official minutes in the Journal of the American Lutheran Conference, IV (July, 1939), p. 74.

²Ibid.

the state, but firmly asserted that the Lutheran church had to assume greater responsibility toward arousing the social consciousness of her members.¹

At that same convention, the commission submitted a ten-point statement on marriage and divorce prepared largely through the efforts of Dr. G. M. Bruce of Luther Seminary. There occurred the usual skirmish with the Preliminary Committee, which voted to refer the statement back to the commission. Dr. Bruce successfully appealed the ruling to the convention floor, and after considerable discussion, five of the ten points were adopted. The adopted sections made some general statements about the maintenance of Christian homes, stated categorically that pastors must refuse to officiate at the marriage of persons not intending to abide by what was termed "the Christian ideal of marriage," and endorsed the enactment of national uniform marriage and divorce laws. The sections dealing with accepted reasons for divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons were excised from the report.² Apart from another statement on marriage, no further documents were adopted by the conference during this period.³

¹Minutes, American Lutheran Conference, Journal of the American Lutheran Conference, VI (January, 1941), pp. 131ff.

²Ibid., pp. 52-55 and 88-89. See also ibid., VIII (January, 1943), pp. 26 and 86. See further the typewritten copy of the Report on Social Relations Commission of the American Lutheran Conference to the 1942 convention (in NLC archives).

³In 1942, the conference voted to modify and receive, rather than adopt, four statements dealing with employer-employee relationships, the rural church, subversive movements, and immoral magazines. See Minutes, American Lutheran Conference, Journal of the American Lutheran Conference, VIII (January, 1943), pp. 26, 46-55, and 86-88. See also American Lutheran Conference, Convention Report (1944), pp. 33-35 and 75-76.

The conference project which was perhaps most successful in fostering a growing social consciousness on the part of some American Lutherans was the publication of the Journal of the American Lutheran Conference, which, toward the end of this period took the name Lutheran Outlook. This monthly periodical carried a series of articles dealing with such areas as church-state relationships, labor-management problems, war and peace, religious liberty, anti-semitism, and the nature of the kingdom of God. The publication provided an open forum for expressing views.

With only a few exceptions, the articles dealing with these topics reflected the growing edge of the Lutheran church. These articles asserted the church's responsibility to help shape the conscience of society, without posing as an ecclesiastical dictator. Lutheran quietism was attacked and Lutherans' silent support of the political-economic status quo was called to question. The causes and concerns of the laboring man were defended and aspects of the employer's stewardship were emphasized. War was opposed as sin, neutrality endorsed, and some voices raised in the defense of pacifism. The kingdom of God was said to relate concretely to this world as well as to the next. The cause of the Jew and the interned American Oriental was supported, although little was said about the Negro. Civil liberties were defended and the church was encouraged to enter the public arena in their defense. By publishing these articles, the conference may have served as a catalyst to arouse Lutherans to a new dimension of Christian responsibility.¹ That movement, however, was most noticeable in the second period under study, by which time World War II had intervened and left its impact.

¹For a listing of these articles, see the bibliography.

It must therefore be concluded that both of the two cooperative agencies--the National Lutheran Council and the American Lutheran Conference--reflected the development of a broadening social consciousness but neither group led it. This situation is understandable because several autonomous church bodies were involved in both agencies. The ULCA and the Augustana Synod, for example, could take advanced positions in their own conventions. When meeting in company with the American Lutheran Church, the Norwegian Lutheran Church, and the smaller Norwegian and Danish bodies, however, representatives of these two former church groups had to accept a less developed stance than they could achieve within their own groups. Despite limited achievement, however, both cooperative agencies officially accepted formal responsibility to address the conscience of their constituency concerning specific social issues. Such action represents a departure from Lutheran quietism.

The main movement in the direction of a more significant role for the Lutheran church in relation to social issues occurred within the churches themselves. Each church chose to move in this direction at its own speed. The picture is not one of a thrust forward on a united front. Instead, the difference in tempo gave to each its own specific character. The order in which each of the churches is considered relates to the degree of change under way in each group.

CHAPTER II

THE NORWEGIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

Of the four groups under study, the church which reflected the least change during this period was the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America which in 1946 adopted the name Evangelical Lutheran Church. The minutes of that body, as well as the reports from the districts, are almost entirely devoid of any references whatsoever to social issues, with the exception of a fairly strong concern for the support of welfare and charitable institutions, and an endorsement of temperance, both of which had been typical of certain sections of Lutheranism.¹

The NLCA was still about 70 per cent rural at the end of this period,² and drew its membership primarily from the upper midwest. In this kind of a setting, the majority of the members of this church body

¹In 1930, the NLCA voted to pledge its "moral support" to the prohibition law. In 1934, 1938, and 1940, they adopted resolutions warning against what was termed the evil of alcohol, supporting total abstinence, and urging support of the Anti-Saloon League's efforts to prohibit all forms of liquor advertising. An editorial in the Lutheran Herald called the repeal of the eighteenth amendment "a calamity." See Norwegian Lutheran Church, Report (Minneapolis, 1930), p. 298; (1932), p. 138; (1934), p. 306; (1938), pp. 33 and 399; (1940), pp. 29 and 360. See also "The Repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment," Lutheran Herald, August 8, 1933, p. 716. By 1930, however, support of prohibition was a conservative stance, not a liberal one, as had been the case earlier. See Paul Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel, pp. 32-45.

²[O. G. Malmin], "Our Church--Seventy Per Cent Rural," Lutheran Herald, August 3, 1943, p. 631.

experienced during these fifteen years not only a depression but a rather devastating and prolonged drought as well.

These conditions had upset the tranquility of the church. Dr. J. A. Aasgaard, NLCA president, confided in his official report to the church in 1931 that he found the economic and social conditions of the day to be "bewildering." He nevertheless perfectly illustrated Troeltsch's characterization of Lutherans by boldly asserting that "moral character, purity of life and stability of conviction weaken more easily in times of well being than in times of adversity. Let us thank God for these chastening times of adversity."¹

The district presidents who commented on the economic conditions in their annual reports and at biennial conventions expressed views similar to those of Dr. Aasgaard. The Rev. A. M. Skindlov, president of the Rocky Mountain district, said such things as the depression often were necessary to bring men closer to God.² In a similar vein, the Rev. J. A. Naess, president of the Pacific district, saw the hand of God's blessing in the suffering. He reported that

many through losses, fears, and hardships encountered in the material world have felt more keenly their need of God and things everlasting in the midst of temporal losses and have sought the supreme need of the soul as well as consolation and Divine assurance of our Father's love and unfailing promises.³

Dr. David Stoeve, president of the North Dakota district, while reporting that there were people knowing hunger and suffering need, nevertheless

¹NLCA, Report (1931), pp. 10-11. An unsigned editorial in the Lutheran Herald reported a decline in church attendance at Owatonna, Minnesota, because people lacked adequate money for gasoline, clothing, and the church collection. See, "Financial Distress and Church Attendance," ibid., September 20, 1932, p. 1068.

²NLCA, Report (1932), p. 182.

³Ibid. (1931), p. 267.

counselled contentment. Said he:

It is to be feared that the rank and file of the membership of our congregations are not content in the present financial depression. In fact we know that this is not the case. It is our lot, because of the nature of our work, to hear a great deal of complaint on the part of our people, and much of it evinces a bitter, impatient, and resentful spirit. It is a matter of much concern that there seems to be so little of Paul's spirit, who under every circumstance said: "I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me."¹

The words of the Rev. Mr. Naess and of Dr. Stoeve likely had meaning to persons of their experience. These men were at that time drawing annual salaries of \$2,500 plus a \$500 house allowance although that was soon modified downward.² By 1932, the situation in the mid-west was so bad that Dr. Stoeve was moved to report that famine stalked the plains. But it stopped before it came to his door. It touched only his neighbors. Stoeve could therefore call it a time of grace because people had "become more serious-minded; . . . souls have been troubled and hearts have longed for things that are better and more stable than the things of this world, . . ."³ It was with this kind of insensitivity that ecclesiastical leaders, insulated against real poverty and famine, attempted to speak with authority about contentment and the unfailing promises of a sovereign God to people who had had to live for years on the edge of starvation.

The discouragement and suffering which resulted from the depression was nevertheless apparently of sufficient magnitude to cause the NLCA church council to reconsider at least briefly the matter of the church's corporate responsibility to society. At the April, 1934 meeting

¹NLCA, Report (1931), p. 225.

²Ibid. (1932), p. 119.

³Ibid., p. 176.

of that body, a statement was adopted for consideration by the general convention which was to convene that summer. The statement began with an open confession that the situation surrounding the events of the depression was the prime motivating force in the re-examination.

Under the stress of the economic and social conditions that have burdened the people of our land and of the world in the last few years, many thoughtful persons have been moved to closely examine the moral principles and conceptions that in practice have so deeply touched our lives. Such testing has found much to deplore and correct. Many have looked to the Church for action, through organized and direct application of its influence and social power, to reform the evil conditions in our national life. Lately, representations have come to us from non-Lutheran sources, to the effect that unofficial agencies should be provided within the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, manned by ministers, to be a cooperating force in these reformatory efforts.¹

The statement acknowledged a "lively interest in the moral aspects of the social and economic trends of our times," and deplored "such immoral and evil conditions as prevail, . . ." It offered sympathy to those enduring want and suffering as a result of what they termed "moral transgression," and urged the pastors and teachers of the church to study the present conditions of the day in order better to apply law and gospel to the lives of those to whom they ministered. "A true citizen of the Kingdom of God should not be unconcerned about the morality of his fellow-citizens as it crystallizes in conditions that affect the whole community," the statement observed. Indeed, the council wished to declare itself "in full sympathy with the moral and humanitarian aim and purpose that has produced these activities for a better order, . . ."²

¹ NLCA, Report (1934), p. 20.

² Ibid., pp. 20-21.

Beyond sympathy, a lively interest, and an innocuous denunciation of undefined evil, however, the council displayed a reluctance to go. The statement pointed out that, since the National Lutheran Council had a committee to study social conditions and trends, it would be inadvisable to form a new committee.¹ The church council then proceeded to set the record clear that, despite the stress and burdens of the day, they were not prepared--yet--to move from the older position.

While we heartily endorse every proper effort of Government to restrain and suppress evil conditions and practices, and the efforts of citizens by word and by vote, to provide laws that curb selfishness and greed, licentiousness and the exercise of perverted conceptions of right and wrong, and while we commend every lawful effort to destroy such institutions as produce immoral and destructive conditions of life, we feel constrained to again point out the fundamental truth that genuine morality issues from the heart of man, and is there created by the power of God's Holy Spirit, when "by His grace we believe His holy Word, and live godly here in time." In a true application of the Word of God to the individual, lies the opportunity of the Church of Christ to be a most powerfully recreating and restraining agency in the field of moral living, in the social, economic and political world.²

The approach to the subject was still the same: preach the law and the gospel to the individual so that he would be recreated and reformed, and he in turn would recreate society. Moreover, no revolutionary reform movement was to be sparked by this group. Obedience was the watchword.

To instill in the mind and heart of the child respect for the authority of God, and for all rightful authority, and in relation to fellow men, loving obedience to the Divine Law, is the Church's

¹One gets the impression that the locus of authority for decision on social issues remained in question for some time. At this point, responsibility was referred to the NLC Committee on Social Trends. In 1941, however, when the American Lutheran Conference was asked to help protect the rights of conscientious objectors, Dr. Aasgaard blocked action by saying the matter had been considered by the National Lutheran Council and a majority of the Council had voted to leave such problems with the individual synods. See Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Lutheran Conference, April 17, 1941, p. 3 (in NLC archives).

²NLCA, Report (1934), p. 21.

most fruitful way to combat the evils of the world and to maintain justice and morality in the land.¹

With this statement the church council must have felt the issue was settled because no other statements on this subject appeared during the 30's and early 40's.

Only two NLCA officials assumed a somewhat different position in this era. One was a former missionary to China, Dr. N. Astrup Larsen, who was selected president of the Iowa district in 1934.² In his first annual report to his district following his election, Dr. Larsen criticized aspects of the capitalistic system and urged the application of the social implications of the gospel to society.

The present social order presents a challenge to the Church. The spirit of acquisitiveness and ruthless competition under the economic doctrine of "laissez-faire" has built up a social structure which today is crumbling. Inordinate wealth in the hands of a few, ten million unemployed and twenty million (one-fifth of our population) on public relief, a system which keeps production down and throws men out of employment in order to keep prices up, a system which results in poverty and want in the midst of abundance, is obviously wrong. The Church has been slow to recognize this, probably because the Church itself has been too closely tied up to this system. The sharp and unscrupulous methods of industry and business have too often been winked at, if not condoned by the Church. This must not continue if the Church is to be faithful to Christ. Unless there is a turning away on the part of our nation from the false materialistic values of the period of industrial and business expansion--unless there is a turning back to the spiritual goals and the ethical teachings of Jesus Christ, there will, as one writer says "be written over our civilization 'Ichabod'--the glory has departed."³

Dr. Larsen went on to raise the question whether or not the church, "for fear of being engulfed by the 'Social Gospel' movement" had not "allowed

¹ NLCA, Report (1934), p. 21.

² The other was Dr. G. M. Bruce, a professor at Luther Seminary and second vice president of the NLCA. Dr. Martin Anderson, president of the Eastern district, also expressed a considerable amount of interest in social issues, but along somewhat more traditional lines.

³ NLCA, Report (1935), p. 31.

ourselves to swing too far to the other side? . . ." He urged the pastors to continue to stress both the need for individual regeneration and "the social implications of the Gospel." If this were done, he argued, "God will own us and use us in bringing the people of our country out of the bewilderment and chaos in which they today find themselves."¹

Two years earlier Dr. Larsen had published a pamphlet entitled, "The Church and The Economic Debacle." In it he asked whether the church should not bear "a great deal of the blame for the existing economic chaos? . . ." "We have, I fear, in our Lutheran Church not given as clear expression as we should to the implications of the Christian Gospel in the matter of the acquisition, the distribution, and the use of property," he wrote.²

Larsen espoused a common social gospel theme by arguing that the kingdom of God was "at the center of all the preaching and teaching of Christ." While agreeing with the traditional Lutheran view that the kingdom was not of this world, Larsen suggested that it was also meant "to be established in this world," though not to be identified with any particular civilization or culture.³

In arguing for the legitimacy of the church's concern in economic and social matters, Dr. Larsen turned to both the Old and New Testaments for support, as Stuckenberg, Gladden, and others had done. "Certainly the Old Testament prophet does not look upon social and

¹ NLCA, Report (1935), pp. 31-32.

² N. Astrup Larsen, The Church and the Economic Debacle, The Lutheran Church: a series of occasional papers of general interest to the entire Lutheran Church (Minneapolis, 1933), pp. 7-8.

³ Ibid., p. 8.

economic matters as outside the province of religion," Larsen wrote. Moreover, he continued, "when we pass to the teachings of Jesus Christ it is evident that these have their social as well as individual aspect."¹

Commenting on the fact that labor looked elsewhere than to the church for guidance, Larsen said:

Too much the Church has allowed herself to become the defender of the "status quo," and unless she repent and with the fearlessness and social passion of the prophets of old proclaim the verdict of God upon an un-Christian economic order, and point the way out, she will in even greater degree lose the respect and confidence of the masses.²

Dr. Larsen tried to express a social consciousness which incorporated certain traditional Lutheran emphases. At the same time he recognized some of the distortions of the Lutheran tradition as well as some of the strengths and weaknesses of the social gospel. Thus, for example, he emphasized the traditional need for personal regeneration and salvation while at the same time contending, as Rauschenbusch had done, that the gospel was social in that the Christian life could be lived only in relation to others. Larsen argued that the church had not made clear that the gospel included a dual individual and social emphasis.

Much of the evangelism we have known in this country has been satisfied to "convert" a man from the less respectable sins and to an easy-going piety of church-going, attendance upon prayer-meetings, and a degree of benevolence. It has failed to make men see that a truly converted man is a different American, a different merchant, a different employer, a different employee, a different voter, a different lawyer, a different banker, a different legislator, a different director of a corporation, a different investor, and so on. It has left many a man with the illusion that he is a Christian because one side of his life has been changed, and has allowed him

¹Larsen, The Church and the Economic Debacle, p. 9.

²Ibid., p. 11.

to imagine that he is in favor with God while he in most of his social relations continues to practice without repentance that which is manifestly selfish and unjust.¹

Unlike other district presidents, Dr. Larsen refused to blame God for the depression, and instead placed the responsibility for it on the doctrine of laissez-faire, charging it with fostering the cruelty and injustices which had characterized the industrial revolution in Europe and America.

But the thing that is of particular interest to us as members of the Church, and that should shame us and stir us to repentance, is the fact that the coming of this economic debacle without doubt has been accelerated by the blessing pronounced upon the doctrine of laissez-faire by the Church or its representatives.²

Pointing out that the church had ventured into the public field concerning the liquor question, Dr. Larsen challenged the church to speak out against the evils of the present form of American capitalism, and to espouse concrete positive proposals for improvement. He contended that the church had to go beyond arguing for the abstract principles of justice and love, and had to deal instead with particular remedies. He called for control of the banking industry and for the reorganization of industry into professions on the basis of the familiar social gospel theme of service.

In industry organized on a professional basis, property would cease to govern industry. The payment of profits to functionless shareholders would be ended by turning them into creditors who would be paid a fixed rate of interest. Capital would no longer be employing labor, but labor would employ capital. The foundation would be laid for industrial peace by placing the workers themselves, workers of all grades, in charge of their own branch of industry and carrying it on for the service of the public, not for the gain of those who own capital.³

¹Larsen, The Church and the Economic Debacle, p. 13.

²Ibid., p. 16.

³Ibid., p. 22.

He argued that it was the church's business to speak up against "man's inhumanity to man," and that it was the church's duty to point out that some property rights were in direct contrast to the law of love.

It is its business to quicken the consciences of men and to insist that any social or economic order which is to deserve the approval of the Church must be established upon principles in harmony with the law of love and the principle that men are to bear one another's burdens. And it must insist, especially, on its own members working honestly and consistently to put these principles to work in any business, private or corporate, with which they are identified.¹

Such statements were, of course, a far cry from the usual, quietistic stance that characterized the bulk of the NLCA membership. It did, however, meet with an unusually favorable response from the Lutheran Herald, official weekly publication of the NLCA. The paper quoted at length from Larsen's publication. Fears were expressed that some readers might consider Larsen's position too anti-republican in its attack on individual responsibility. The editorial writer argued on the one hand that a person should not align himself with partisan programs, while on the other hand he confessed an uneasy conscience about this operating principle.

In our twenty years of experience as an editor of a church paper we have found out that as long as we deal with justice and righteousness in the abstract, as a pure theory we are on safe ground, but the minute we descend from the transcendental and enter into the empirical, or begin to deal with experience and life phenomena, we are apt to be told to confine ourselves to our legitimate activity of "preaching the Gospel."²

This was, of course, the dilemma faced by most NLCA clergymen. By choosing to remain above the line of battle, they preached a message which lacked a significant point of contact with daily life and were

¹Larsen, The Church and the Economic Debacle, p. 22.

²"The Difficulties in Dealing with Economic Problems," Lutheran Herald, January 23, 1934, p. 77.

ineffectual as leaders of social reform. Despite the confession, one finds in the pages of the Lutheran Herald almost no support for the position advanced by Dr. Larsen.¹

The most articulate call for economic reform came, significantly, not from clergymen, but from laymen. Three of these men who taught at colleges operated by the NLCA wrote critiques of society and supported Larsen's general position.

Dr. Ottar Tinglum, German-educated professor of sociology at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, wrote an article entitled, "Capitalism and the Christian Church," in which he saw the appeal to self-interest on the part of capitalism as being "in diametric opposition" to the church which he said proclaimed "service and sacrifice for the common good and for God as the goal to be sought."² He called on the church to heed the appeal of N. Astrup Larsen to help blaze the way to a new and just social order.

Capitalism is neither in its fundamental principles nor in its moral effects Christian, for it is largely to blame for the making of a world in which a premium is placed on anti-Christian conduct in economic affairs and in man's relations to man. It has contributed heavily to the making of a world full of crime and misery, dishonesty and deceit, intellectual prostitution, poverty and inequalities, a world that is not conducive to Christian life and living. In fact, as the days go by it becomes increasingly difficult to remain a Christian.³

Dr. P. J. Bardon, a social science professor at Pacific Lutheran College, submitted an article to the Herald in which he agreed with Dr. Tinglum

¹ See Oscar Olsrud, "God Demands Justice," Lutheran Herald, September 29, 1940, p. 987; and J. M. Wick, "Life Functions of the Church," ibid., August 20, 1940, p. 857.

² "Capitalism and the Christian Church," ibid., February 16, 1937, p. 151.

³ Ibid.

that capitalism was not Christian.

The basic principles of capitalism are egoism, selfishness and the competitive profit motives. It is not surprising, then, that an ever-widening industrialism under the sponsorship of competitive profit-seeking has fastened its grip on humanity. This is in diametric opposition to the Christian concept of the brotherhood of man. There cannot be brotherhood of man with a large divergence of income.¹

The Lutheran Herald was not prepared to go as far as the laymen in a critical appraisal of capitalism. While conceding that the profit motive should be subordinated, the editorial writer argued that he could not find the capitalistic system to be sinful in itself.²

The third layman whose voice sounded a note different from the dominant view of the clergy was Dr. C. A. Melby, chairman of the department of economics and sociology at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. He wrote a number of articles in the Herald discussing the plight of the industrial worker. He called attention to the job insecurity of the laboring man and his utter dependence on his employer for decent working conditions. Melby pointed out that "a very large percentage of industrial workers earn much less than is necessary to keep them and their families above a health and efficiency level." He further asserted that protestants have neglected the laboring people in the attempt to follow the middle class, and that therefore labor believes the church is on the side of capital. "Our next great home mission field should be within the industrial labor group,"³ he urged.

¹P. J. Bardon, "Capitalism and the Christian Church," Lutheran Herald, April 20, 1937, pp. 396-397.

²"The Profit Motive," ibid., February 16, 1937, p. 148.

³"The Church and the City Industrial Worker," ibid., March 7, 1938, pp. 224 and 249.

Concern for the safeguard of property interests had caused the centralization of property into fewer and fewer hands, Melby contended. This, in turn, he said, had disregarded human welfare, exploited labor, wasted resources, and helped cause unemployment. Many church people were angels on Sunday but brutes on Monday, he charged, and added that many clergymen knew little about nor cared less for what occurred outside the formal religious life of the parish. He challenged the church to an active participation in civic affairs.

Melby was almost alone during this entire fifteen-year period in speaking out on behalf of the laborer. The Herald had a number of articles dealing with the farmer,¹ but on those few occasions when it spoke about the laborer, the position was at best ambiguous. For example, in 1935 an editorial said that "the Bible teaches thrift, temperance, and that a person who does not provide for his own is worse than a heathen."² Editorials called for tax relief for the railroad companies to aid them in what was understood to be their distress, but they had no word for the railroad worker.³ In fact, the only worker to get as much attention in the Herald as the farmer, was the clergyman. It reflects both a dominant rural constituency and an ecclesiastical self-interest. The latter might well add a footnote to the

¹These concerns sometimes took the form of calling for a "reasonable inflation" to help bring the dollar back up to the value it had when the farmer had acquired his mortgage. At other times, it resulted in a plea for income tax reform that would place heavier responsibility upon those best able to pay. See "How To End the Depression," Lutheran Herald, February 14, 1933, p. 140; "The Price of Farm Commodities Must Be Raised," ibid., October 31, 1933, p. 980; and "A Demand for Economic Justice," ibid., July 28, 1931, p. 933.

²"The Highest Form of Civilization," ibid., March 26, 1935, p. 291.

³"The Plight of the Railroads," ibid., January 19, 1932, p. 70.

data supporting Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest.

On another occasion the editor could muse as follows:

something is decidedly wrong when in our day of mass production and the abundance of everything needed for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, millions of people are worrying about where to get their next meal, while others are sailing around in million dollar yachts and do not know what to do with all their money A system which permits a few to control the machinery of production and control the wealth of the nation by interlocking directories of mammoth corporations, cutting the wages of the laborers and at the same time declaring huge dividends, . . . is a system which must be changed, not only to save the Constitution, but our whole system of government and our nation. . . . The private power corporations are, according to investigations of a governmental commission, overcharging the people of the United States one billion a year. . . . Has the church anything to do with this? . . . Here it is the duty of the prophet of justice and righteousness, not to preach another Gospel, but to apply the perfect law of God to existing conditions and demand repentance from those who are grinding the faces of the poor and impoverished.¹

It is significant to note that although the statement reminds one of the catalog of evils social gospel champions were accustomed to detailing, the call in the end is only the usual appeal for repentance, not a summons for justice.

Other areas of influence, in addition to that of the depression, might be treated for their potential impact on the NLCA attitude toward social responsibility. These areas might be the ecumenical movement, the rise of Nazism, and the outbreak of World War II. All of these did exert influence in some of the Lutheran churches studied.

Almost no influence from ecumenical circles, however, is discernible in the NLCA during this period. An observer at the Stockholm conference filed a negative report, saying the conference was a failure and suggesting it represented "a tremendous and subtle assault by com-

¹"Our Unwieldy Economic Brontosaurus," Lutheran Herald, April 14, 1936, pp. 379-380.

bined Modernistic Protestantism upon confessional fidelity."¹ No official delegate was sent by the NLCA to the Oxford conference of 1937 although an editorial in the Lutheran Herald called the Oxford report on economic affairs a "valuable contribution."² Dr. G. F. Bruce addressed the Lutheran World Convention in 1929 about the need for greater social responsibility on the part of the churches.³ Despite that address, despite his work on the social action committees of the National Lutheran Council and the American Lutheran Conference, and despite his work at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Dr. Bruce did not bring about an appreciable response.

The rise of nazism and the advent of World War II dented the NLCA but did not move it the way these forces moved other Lutheran churches studied. The Lutheran Herald at first defended German Lutherans, rebuffed Hitler's critics, and criticized the Jews.⁴ Later the Herald made an about-face. Editorials called Hitler an autocrat, praised the Jews, and expressed some hope Hitler would not be able to "steam-roll" the church, despite his totalitarian state.⁵

¹J. C. K. Preus, "The Stockholm Conference, an Evaluation," Lutheran Church Herald, February 16, 1926, p. 202.

²"Oxford and Edinburgh," Lutheran Herald, November 23, 1937, p. 1143.

³"The Lutheran Conception of the Relation between Christianity and the World," The Second Lutheran World Convention (Philadelphia, 1930), pp. 106ff.

⁴"Dangers Threatening the Lutheran Church in Germany," Lutheran Herald, April 18, 1933, p. 349; "Chancellor Adolph Hitler," ibid., April 25, 1933, pp. 372-373; "Hitler Unites and Saves Germany from Communism," ibid., June 20, 1933, p. 564; and "Hitler Burns Bolshevik Books," ibid.

⁵"Will the Nazi of Germany Dictate a Creed to the Church?", ibid., August 22, 1933, p. 756; "A Formal Protest against the Ban of Jewish Pastors," ibid., November 14, 1933, p. 1029; "Religious Liberty in

From a solidly traditional section of Iowa, a new voice was now heard from one of the most conservative men in the entire NLCA. The Rev. S. J. Strandjord delivered a paper at the Iowa district pastoral conference on the subject, "Christ, State and Society." He agreed that Christians were to exercise social responsibility. The problem, he said, was "how can we, as members of Christian Churches, guide and influence society so that we may be spared the European situation?"¹ The picture of the old, quietistic stance crumbling in Europe was beginning to shatter a similar quietism even in America as the most conservative traditionalists began slowly to look for a new position. That new position, however, did not emerge far in the NLCA.

As World War II erupted, another factor to weigh on the conscience of members of the NLCA was armed conflict itself. The church continued to hear what could be known of the story of the persecution of the church under Nazism, especially as it moved to Norway and Denmark. The broader question of war itself also was projected into the discussion. The martyrdom of Kaj Munk and the resistance of men like Niemoeller and Berggrav became familiar to Lutheran Herald readers through repeated references to these men.²

Germany Threatened," Lutheran Herald, December 12, 1933, p. 1139; "The Hitler Steam-Roller and the Church," ibid.; "Hitler's Totalitarian State," ibid., February 27, 1934, p. 196; "The Church Under Nazi Rule," ibid., April 24, 1934, p. 388; "Oppose Class and Racial Prejudices," ibid., November 8, 1938, p. 1129; "Anti-Semitism," ibid., November 29, 1938, p. 1199; "Our Attitude in the Present Crisis," ibid.; and "A Statement about Conditions in Germany," ibid., p. 1200.

¹"Church, State and Society," ibid., November 23, 1937, pp. 1147-1149.

²C. A. Melby, "The State of the Lutheran Church in Germany," ibid., July 17, 1944, pp. 647-648 and July 24, 1944, pp. 661-662. See also [O. G. Malmin], "Bishop Meiser Protests," ibid., October 30, 1944, p. 956; [Malmin], "Reasons for Withdrawal of the Bavarian Church," ibid.,

During this entire period, the Herald spoke on behalf of a desire for peace and disarmament. The paper adopted a theme rather familiar during the 30's, namely that the high war profits motivated agitation for war. The editorial writer continued to cite figures concerning high defense costs and suggested that the money be used to reduce the national debt and to relieve the unemployed and starving. When a world disarmament conference was to convene in Geneva in 1932, the Herald called for its general support, but criticized the Federal Council for submitting too detailed a blueprint for disarmament. The voice of church leaders in technical matters was not as valuable as that of those in government who gave all their time to studying such items, the paper said.¹

While calling for disarmament, the Herald did not advocate pacifism. Instead it cited the Augsburg Confession as authority for the position that a Christian could be a soldier. It contended that "this pacifist agitation to refuse absolutely to have anything to do

October 30, 1944, p. 957; [Malmin], "Kaj Munk--Christian Martyr," Lutheran Herald, February 1, 1944, pp. 104-105; Osborne Hauge, "Tribute to the Church of Norway," ibid., August 17, 1943, pp. 669-670; Hauge, "The Church in Norway," ibid., July 7, 1942, pp. 714-715; Hauge, "The Impregnable Wall," ibid., July 6, 1943, pp. 567-568; Hauge, "We Must Obey God," ibid., June 29, 1943, pp. 544-545 and 549; Herman E. Jorgenson, "Hitler Endorsed by German Church Leaders," ibid., September 9, 1941, p. 926; Elias Newman, "Niemoeller," ibid., June 3, 1941, pp. 582ff.; [Malmin], "Faith of Our Fathers," ibid., March 24, 1942, pp. 295-297; J. A. Aasgaard, "Church and School in Norway," ibid., April 14, 1942, pp. 388-390; "The Norwegian State Church Has Become a Free Church," ibid., June 9, 1942, p. 613; and "The Church in Norway," ibid., October 20, 1942, p. 1097.

¹"The World Spending Billions for War," ibid., September 16, 1930, p. 1300; "Talking Peace and Preparing for War," ibid.; "Armament Firms and War Profiteers Agitating for War," ibid., March 30, 1934, p. 268; "The World Disarmament Conference," ibid., January 26, 1932, p. 99; "United States War Budget," ibid., p. 100; and "Government by Non-Resistance," ibid., p. 101.

with any kind of war is an entirely mistaken method of trying to end war."¹

We can be honest advocates of peace and good-will without going to the extreme of pacifism advocated today by certain men who claim to be leaders in the church. Students are induced to sign pledges not to have anything to do with any kind of war, and the impression is created that all those who are engaged to serve in the army and navy are sinning against the spirit and principles of Christianity. We are pleased to see that the students of our Lutheran colleges are not misled by this propaganda.²

In discussing the right of conscientious objectors, the Herald at first protested the action of the federal government in denying citizenship to Douglas C. Macintosh, a professor at Yale, who had refused to bear arms. Two years later, after the United States Supreme Court had voted five to four to uphold the government, the editorial reflected a different stance. It expressed agreement with both majority and minority opinions. It agreed with the minority that a duty existed to a moral power higher than the state. It nevertheless said the court was correct in upholding the government because the state justly claimed the right to survive.³ What was affirmed in theory was denied in practice. The net result of this position was to give to the state in a practical way the same kind of absolute right and power which Nazism sought.

¹"Do the Churches of America Believe that Military Service is Sin?", Lutheran Herald, January 15, 1935, pp. 51-52; and "Is a Soldier Engaged in a Sinful Business?", ibid., February 11, 1936, pp. 139-140.

²"At Peace With All Nations," ibid., January 14, 1936, pp. 27-28.

³"Conscientious Objectors," ibid., March 18, 1930, p. 371; ibid., February 16, 1932, p. 196; "The Supreme Court on Slippery Ice," ibid., p. 197; and "Let the Supreme Court Decision Stand," ibid.

In an editorial entitled, "The Law of Self-Defense Is Sanctioned in the Word of God," the Herald continued to defend the idea of a just war by an appeal to both the Old and New Testament, especially Romans 13. Armies were needed, the writers argued, because all the people in the world were not Christian. In an amazingly optimistic observation for a paper which had attacked the social gospel for too high an estimate of man, the editorial went on to say that "if all the people in the world were converted and were true Christians governed by the Golden Rule, there would be no more need of a police force, army, or navy, and there would be an end to war, . . ."¹ Since such an ideal did not exist, he said he was forced to deal with realities.

The editorial writer cited statements from Martin Luther emphasizing the point that "even under the New Testament, the sword is established by God's word and commandment, and those who use it aright and fight obediently, serve God thereby and are obedient to His Word." Luther was further quoted as saying that "if worldly rulers call on them to fight, then they ought to and must fight, and be obedient, not as Christians but as members of the state and obedient subjects, as regards the body and temporal possessions."²

By the mid '30's United States foreign policy came under attack and isolationist considerations emerged. Editorials protested that foreign diplomats were trying to entangle the United States in the affairs of Europe in order to help the latter underwrite the new costs

¹"The Law of Self-Defense Is Sanctioned in the Word of God," Lutheran Herald, February 11, 1936, pp. 140-141.

²Quoted in "A Brief Quotation from Luther on War," ibid., February 11, 1936, p. 141.

arising from the impending European conflict. In the Far East, it was charged, efforts were being made to involve America in the Japanese-Chinese struggle. "We are to be a sort of international police force to see to it that everything is right in the world,"¹ an editorial complained. When war broke out in Spain, United States actions were viewed with alarm. The action of the navy milling around in the Spanish war zone was likened to a "gang of drunken brawlers." The writer fretted that the situation would erupt into a slaughter of innocents. As the war clouds began to look more ominous, he argued that "we can keep out, as many European countries did, if we have honest statesmen, who look to the welfare of the United States." When the Federal Council recommended that the United States join the world court, the Herald objected strenuously. Not only should such decisions be left to the Senate, it was argued, but in addition, America ought not join the court because this would involve her in European conflicts by virtue of her availability to enforce the court's decisions.²

Unwavering in its isolationist stand, the Herald said in the fall of 1938: "we see no reason for extravagant expenditures at this time. We are not threatened with any invasion. There is no nation ready to cross either the Atlantic or Pacific ocean to invade the United States . . ."³ Endorsement was given to the stand taken by the famous isolationist, Hamilton Fish. Much attention was accorded the

¹"At Peace with all Nations," Lutheran Herald, January 14, 1936, p. 27.

²"World Peace," ibid., January 26, 1937, p. 77.

³"A New War To End War in the Making," ibid., November 8, 1938, p. 1127.

isolationist views of Senator Henrik Shipstead from Minnesota.¹ Only an occasional voice was raised in dissent.²

In the summer of 1939, the Lutheran Herald received a new editor, the Rev. O. G. Malmin. Shortly after he was installed as editor, he wrote "A Plea for Christian Sanity" asking for support of Roosevelt's pledge of neutrality.

It is not the province of Lutheran Herald to instruct its readers in the field of politics, economics, and international relations, except insofar as they touch definitely and in definite instances upon matters of Christian thought and conduct. Neither in this editorial nor in others to come does the editor set himself up as an authority on these subjects.

Our relation to our country is to heed our President's plea for neutrality, and to throw all our Christian forces into the struggle to maintain that neutrality.³

In commenting on the action of the National Lutheran Editors and Managers Association, unalterably opposing "any legislation that may jeopardize true neutrality on the part of the United States" Malmin observed that he felt the stand taken represented that position of a large part of the Lutheran churches.⁴

¹"Shall We Try To Save Democracy Once More?", Lutheran Herald, May 9, 1939, p. 436. See also Henrik Shipstead, "WCAL Radio Talk," ibid., January 10, 1939, pp. 32-33.

²Rev. Byron Nelson, an ultra conservative clergyman from Wisconsin, while defending the concept of a just war, nevertheless contended that the conscientious objector should be honored for his position. See Byron Nelson, "More about War," ibid., March 17, 1936, pp. 284-285. See also a plea for abolition of war by G. Smedal, "Can the Church Make Wars To Cease?", ibid., February 9, 1937, pp. 128-129.

³"A Plea for Christian Sanity," ibid., September 19, 1939, pp. 875-876.

⁴"When Editors Meet," ibid., October 17, 1939, p. 979.

Dr. Malmin defended the idea of a just war and supported the National Lutheran Council in its decision not to adopt a resolution concerning conscientious objectors. Malmin wrote that, if he were a pastor, he would instruct such a person in the Word, "for he does not believe the position of the conscientious objector to be tenable in the light of the Word."¹ When accused of being one-sided in the discussion, Malmin replied that he considered war to be a "futile, insane, horrible means of attempting to settle international disputes" and that he would continue to pray that America might be spared such a scourge. If war were to come, however, he made it clear that he stood in the traditional Lutheran stance concerning acceptance of authority.

If, however, war comes, we shall consider that it has been declared or accepted as inevitable by our representative government and shall remember that the Word says, "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power, but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." Therefore we shall be then, as we are now, obedient to the government."²

The position taken by Malmin was not challenged in the Herald. Indeed, other articles supported it. The president of Luther College, for example, wrote: "nor is there any question as to the kind of government to which we shall render obedience. We are to render obedience to 'the powers that be,' whether the officials who exercise the function of government are such as we would choose or not." He continued, "it is a cardinal principle of the Lutheran Church that Christians must be loyal to their government, that disloyalty to the

¹"The Church and the American Scene," Lutheran Herald, February 18, 1941, pp. 171-172.

²"Have We Been One-Sided?", ibid., March 25, 1941, pp. 295-296.

government is sin against God."¹ One could hardly wish for a more exact statement to provide theological justification for any kind of government, including that of an Adolph Hitler.

At the first NLCA convention to meet following Pearl Harbor, President J. A. Aasgaard said the war called upon all citizens to give of their means, time, and lives in the service and defense of America. The convention responded by adopting a resolution urging members "to manifest their loyalty by giving full support to the war efforts of their country with their subsistence and, if necessary, with their lives."²

One can see, therefore, from the history which these examples illustrate, that the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America hardly moved from its previous quietistic stance during this period.³ There were

¹Oscar L. Olson, "Our Country and Our Church," Lutheran Herald, March 24, 1942, p. 301.

²NLCA, Report (1942), p. 29.

³It should also be stated that the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, reflected no change concerning social responsibility during this period, in so far as the official minutes are concerned. At the 1935 convention, a resolution was presented by the Northern Illinois district calling for a study of the new social trends and the relation of the church to them. The action reflected the concern of pastors confronting the urban problems of Chicago and other industrial areas. Missouri, however, summarily dismissed the appeal. The resolution had cited the shift in Missouri from a predominantly rural to an increasingly urban culture, the linguistic, social, and economic changes within Missouri, and the breakdown of meaningful communication between the church and the world, and asked for a committee to study the situation, with a report to be made to the following general convention. In response to the appeal, Missouri adopted the following resolution: "Since the ailment of humanity in this new day is the same as it always was, namely, sin, and since the cure remains the same, namely the God-given Gospel of Jesus Christ, and since our pastoral conferences and other agencies of the Synod are, and in the past have been, carefully studying the problems confronting our church in its practical work, Resolved, that we do not create a new committee for this purpose." See Missouri Synod, Proceedings (St. Louis, 1935), p. 134. See also Ralph L. Moellering, "The Missouri Synod and Social Problems: A Theological and Sociological Analysis of

stirrings and reactions, but no major movements.

A slight change, however, was beginning to emerge out of the various agitations concerning the church's responsibility toward society. Dr. O. G. Malmin reflected the dominant view in the NLCA in almost everything he wrote. He now reflected, in an editorial near the end of this period, an incipient change concerning social responsibility. He confessed that the content normally associated with the words "social gospel" had caused the conservative evangelicals "to shy away from the subject as something accursed." On the contrary, he contended,

there definitely is a "social gospel" taught by the Word of God, one which neither individual nor church can with impunity disregard. The gospel of Jesus Christ does give men power to fight against the evils around him; that gospel does lay upon the church the duty of being salt, light, and leaven in its surroundings. The applications of the commands of Christ by regenerate people and by the church to its surroundings is the true "social gospel."¹

After years of debate, in which the dominant view had always been that society was to be addressed only by individual, regenerate persons, it was now said that this responsibility was also the corporate task of the church. The change was slight. It had borne no significant results. It merely suggested a direction--a new direction--in which the NLCA might move if the individual voices of agitation could win new support. Hopkins and May had suggested that the change in American protestantism had come in the last century as churches shifted from rural to urban communities. For the NLCA, 70 per cent rural, the prospect of radical change was not too bright.

the Relations from 1917 to 1941," Harvard Theological Quarterly, 57 (October, 1964), pp. 388-390.

¹"The Social Gospel according to Paul," Lutheran Herald, August 11, 1942, p. 823.

CHAPTER III

THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

The American Lutheran Church shifted its stance with respect to social responsibility considerably more during this period than did the Norwegian Lutheran Church. The ALC was formed in 1930 from a merger of three Lutheran bodies, namely, the former Buffalo, Iowa, and Ohio synods. The three merging groups represented some of the most conservative Lutherans in America. Each was of German origin whose histories were filled with theological controversies on behalf of what was considered to be the orthodox faith.¹

Two main social issues were given some consideration by the ALC during this era. These factors were the depression and war.

Born about one year after the fatal stock market plunge of 1929, the ALC was depression-conscious from the beginning. The effect was felt immediately in the kind of stringent financial control which the church body imposed from the outset upon the various departments and institutions of education, charities, and missions. The impact also reflected itself in a changing attitude concerning the church's responsibility toward society, although the impetus in this direction developed slowly.

Speaking to the first biennial convention of the church in 1932, President C. C. Hein detailed a number of calamities which had befallen

¹See Meuser, The Formation of the American Lutheran Church.

members of the church. He spoke of the fact that fortunes had been lost, life's savings had vanished, farmers had suffered crop failures, markets did not exist for produce, many people had lost homes and farms, millions were unemployed suffering want, and that the total impact of the depression had entered nearly every home. Hein nevertheless concluded in terms which illustrated what Troeltsch had said about Lutherans:

Shall we murmur? Shall we complain? Let us remember that, notwithstanding the present economic condition, we have many things for which to be thankful. The Lord has spared our lives. He has given us food and raiment. He has daily provided abundantly for all the needs of life. He has protected us from all danger and guarded and kept us from all evil. If we heed Paul's admonition, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content"; and if with Luther we confess that God does this purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us, we will also say that we are in duty bound to thank and praise Him.¹

This statement sets in sharp focus a crude doctrine of providence and an uncritical acceptance of the status quo prevalent among some American Lutherans. The statement was both compassionless and contradictory in the manner in which it overlooked the real facts of human existence. The situation illustrates well the tragedy in which much of American Lutheranism found itself at this moment. Confronted by millions of people suffering through no fault of their own, while heirs of an active doctrine of God's providence, many Lutherans retreated from the facts of life to make dogmatic assertions about both God and man that plainly were not true. The climax of Dr. Hein's address came with the statement: "THE BUDGET MUST BE BALANCED." The statement was repeated twice and printed in capital letters. Nothing else received that emphasis.²

Hein's view must be taken as representative of the ALC at this

¹American Lutheran Church, Minutes (Columbus, 1932), p. 5.

²Ibid., pp. 15-16.

time. Not even the seminaries challenged so inadequate a position. In fact, they supported it. In 1935, Dr. J. M. Reu, professor at Wartburg Seminary and the leading theologian of the ALC, joined with Professor P. H. Buehring of Capital Seminary in the publication of a huge volume on Christian ethics. Despite the critical economic situation which the country still faced, Reu and Buehring devoted only six pages to the entire question of labor and property, which was the same number of pages devoted to "the Consummation of the Soul in the Intermediate State." Discussing the unequal distribution of wealth, the authors asserted that this economic factor may be due to God's providence or simply to lazy indolence. The complexities of the issues involved were really not discussed. Instead, the writers merely declared that "every man should work in order to have the means to provide for his own . . . to support the work of the church . . . and to prove his brotherly love in Christian charity . . ."¹ The man who wanted work, who was not lazy, but who could not find employment, was completely ignored. He was, nevertheless, presumably to believe in a God of grace, who, out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, it was said, abundantly cared for man's daily needs. To the thoughtful person--whether in the church or out of it, whether caught in the hardship of an economic squeeze or watching from the sidelines in modest affluence--the effort to focus on providence in such a context must have appeared at best to be ludicrous.² Nevertheless, such

¹Christian Ethics, (Columbus, 1935), pp. 375ff.

² Compare the above statements with a section from the episcopal address to the General Conference of the Methodist Church, meeting in 1932. It read, in part, as follows: "It cannot be denied that the industrial practices of past decades have given us the deplorable conditions of today. Industry has as a rule given labor a grudging, insufficient wage, keeping it down by child exploitation, by suppression of legitimate organizations, and by other expedients, while at the same time huge

statements were given wide expression in the church.

Speaking to the Dakota District convention in 1932, President G. C. Landgrebe pictured God as an autocratic, benevolent despot. In reference to the depression, he said: "In such a time the faithful Christian looks up to God, his Maker, who . . . holds the reins of world government in His strong hand, for the Christian knows that when human aid fails then God is a very present help in trouble . . ."¹ President H. L. Adix of the Iowa District expressed a doctrine of providence, the force of whose logic would remove responsibility for the depression from people.

No doubt our Father in heaven has His reasons for putting the depression on the program of his scheme of things at this time after the speed and jazz of the past decade, frenzied buying and frenzied production, artificial speeding up of markets and high living in general, with its concomitant spirit of worldliness, loose thinking and loose living. He did it to make us fetch up and think, to take

fortunes have been amassed for the favored owners of the resources of production. To-day the burden is without conscience shifted to the worker, who, after giving his labor for miserable financial results, is turned off to starve or beg. . . . The worth of human life lies at the root of the social teachings of Jesus. When industry has violated that ideal it has been un-Christian. . . . We as a church stand ready to share the blame for these conditions. But we know now that the kingdom of God cannot be built on the poverty of the many and the absurd and cruel wealth of the few. From the viewpoint of citizenship we of America know that the democracy for which our fathers died may be destroyed by the inhuman and un-Christian monopoly of great wealth. Such a monopoly would destroy business itself. And if not corrected it would destroy society and the state. In no uncertain terms and with deep conviction we call upon the leaders of both capital and labor to remake the whole structure of industrial life upon the teachings of Christ. . . . Those who refuse to listen to the demands for such reconstruction constitute a most dangerous threat to the development of orderly civilization." Quoted in W. W. Sweet, Methodism in American History (New York, 1933), p. 362. The Methodists can be criticized for their romantic expectations concerning the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, that group at least avoided blaming God for the predicament of the depression.

¹Dakota District, ALC, Minutes (1932), p. 31.

inventory of what we really have and want, and re-evaluate our stock in trade. He did it to make us turn inward . . . and show us the value of spiritual and eternal things . . .¹

Only the president of the Minnesota District among ALC officialdom sounded a different note at this time. Not wishing to blame God for the predicament, he suggested that the financial chaos had been caused by "personal greed, industrial injustice, and political corruption." That being the case, he continued, "the Church should endeavor to sharpen the public conscience and show, on the basis of the teachings of Jesus Christ, that an honest worker is entitled to a living wage, protection against unemployment, and security in old age."² Resolutions adopted by the district convention, however, did not embody these views. Instead, the delegates affirmed that the only hope out of the situation was repentance, and expressed concern for the pastor's salary.³ No concern was expressed for the income of the non-ordained men who comprised the district membership.

One observes in the ALC, therefore, the same crude doctrine of providence that had characterized the NLCA. This doctrine was combined with an appeal to an eschatological hope. A typical example of the latter is an article by Dr. Samuel Salzmann, professor of homiletics at Wartburg Seminary. After agreeing that greed in the capitalistic system had helped bring about the depression, Salzmann asserted that God also had had his "gracious hand" in the depression, seeking to bring men to repentance. "The Christian knows," Salzmann wrote, "that these times of depression came from God, and so he also knows that only God can end

¹Iowa District, ALC, Minutes (1932), p. 2.

²Minnesota District, ALC, ibid., p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 9.

them." This kind of providentialism with its outright determinism left no room for even a modified human freedom without which any kind of social responsibility, individual or corporate, was impossible. God, Salzmann said, was so kind and gracious that He would never tempt a man beyond what the individual would be able to bear. God would therefore "end these times of depression when they have fulfilled the gracious purpose which He had in mind when He sent them." Since the Christian knew about eternity and the joy of ultimate hope, Salzmann counselled, he could afford to be led down dark valleys. The whole situation pointed to one nice conclusion: "Happy is the lot of the Christian."¹

Such theology was, of course, out of touch with the existence of many persons. Some people, broken by the depression, had apparently been tempted above what both body and spirit were able to bear.² Yet Dr. Salzmann could speak in this fashion while having the official responsibility to teach seminary students to preach correctly.

Not everyone, however, spoke as Salzmann had done. One of those who did not was the editor of the Lutheran Standard, E. W. Schramm. In September, 1933, he edited the first special labor issue ever published in the history of the Standard. "In our mind," Schramm editorialized, "there is no doubt as to the propriety of centering our attention in one issue upon the problems connected with labor and unemployment and upon the whole subject of social justice, of which the labor problem is an integral part." He went on to endorse a church-wide

¹Samuel Salzmann, "The Christian in Times of Depression," Kirchliche Zeitschrift, 58 (February, 1934), pp. 78-89.

²See George C. Bubolz, "In Time of Troubles," Lutheran Standard, February 19, 1938, p. 3.

study of the social order in the light of the gospel and suggested the establishment of a committee on social welfare.¹ Articles in the special issue paid tribute to "modernistic elements in the Protestant churches for their penetrating studies and clear cut analysis of present day social and economic ills" and categorically stated that "our Lutheran church has undoubtedly failed to restudy that Gospel in the light of modern economic, social and governmental conditions, failed to be for community, national and international life as well as for individual life, the light and the salt of the earth."²

By making his paper a forum for the discussion of social issues, Dr. Schramm became one of the prime movers in attempting to awaken the conscience of Lutheran churchmen to a broader social responsibility. Civic ideals "cannot be divorced from redemption through Jesus Christ," Schramm contended. Hence "the church must look beyond the individual to the body social and the body politic and let her voice and her testimony include these too in her testimonial."³ The plea of Rauschenbusch that church groups address the social institutions and try to reform the social structures was now being made by the elected editor of the official paper of the ALC. "Beyond all controversy," he wrote early in 1933, "our times call for a conscientious endeavor on the part of individual Christians and of Christian Churches to think of our religion not simply

¹E. W. Schramm, "Just So You Think about It," Lutheran Standard, September 2, 1933, p. 3.

²Charles K. Fegley and E. W. Schramm, "The Movement toward Social Justice," ibid., September 2, 1933, p. 8.

³"The Lutheran at the Polls," ibid., October 29, 1932, p. 4.

in terms of doctrinal statements but also in terms of practical application to everyday relationships."¹

During the 1930's, the tempo of attacks on capitalism accelerated and the call for reform was sounded more frequently. By 1935, Dr. Schramm could write that

we Lutherans are giving increasing attention to the social consciousness which this Gospel, rightly taught and apprehended, will arouse in the minds of Christian individuals and groups and to influence . . . the seasoning and cleansing of the social order.

That did not mean, he continued, that he considered reform to be the primary function of the church. He said he preferred to strive for the golden mean somewhere between isolation and absorption.²

The propriety of the church speaking out on social, economic, and political issues was both attacked and supported. The attack was illustrated by the Rev. E. A. Welke, president of the Minnesota District, who wrote an impassioned plea to the clergy to desist from any comments on such issues. "May God keep our church from ever participating in political campaigns," he intoned, "may He keep her ministry from discussing political and economic questions from her pulpits, . . ."³

¹[Schramm], "How about a Christian 'Social Creed?'" , Lutheran Standard, January 14, 1933, pp. 3-4.

²"The Golden Mean," ibid., February 16, 1935, p. 2. See also "Steering Between Scylla and Charybdis," ibid., April 1, 1933, p. 4. In 1934, Dr. Schramm conducted an uncontrolled poll via the Lutheran Standard. Approximately 700 persons responded. One of the questions asked was "which economic system appears to you to be the less antagonistic and more consistent with the ideals and methods of Jesus: capitalism or a co-operative commonwealth?" In response, 77 per cent of the laymen and 89 per cent of the clergy said they favored the co-operative commonwealth, whereas only 19 per cent of the laymen and 10 per cent of the clergy voted for capitalism. The remainder said they were undecided. "An Analysis of 700 Votes on Questions of War and Wealth," ibid., August 4, 1934, pp. 12-13.

³"You Are the Salt of the Nation," ibid., July 31, 1937, p. 3.

Welke was, of course, reflecting the standard view presented in the seminaries. Reu and Buehring had written that the church must seek to instill in the American citizen the Christian principles of righteousness, justice, tolerance, forbearance, mutual helpfulness, and cooperation. This was not to be done by what was described as "futile efforts to control legislation or to direct the administration of government, . . ." To do the latter would be to infringe on the sphere of the state. God had created both church and state and given each its own duties. The state was to be responsible for the so-called natural life of man; the church for the spiritual. In its own sphere, each was supreme. The state was to provide order and protect property and the church was to inculcate religious principles and motives in the lives of the citizens. The church was to do this "not by invading political assemblies and public rostrums, but by preaching emphatically and convincingly from her pulpits the whole Gospel of Christ . . ."¹

Dr. C. G. Wolf, a pastor in Baltimore, Maryland, challenged the traditional view of the complete separation of the two spheres when he addressed the Eastern District convention in 1936. Dr. Wolf maintained that Luther believed in cooperation between the two sovereign spheres. Hence he argued, "the separation of church and state cannot be maintained in its conservative interpretation and practice. It is contrary to the principles and practices of the prophets, apostles and Christ."² Lutherans, Wolf charged, do not know how to understand the doctrine of separation of church and state "except by being silent on civic problems and standing aloof when any effort is made to solve them." Such a

¹Christian Ethics, pp. 340-341.

²Eastern District, ALC, Minutes (1936), p. 40.

position, he contended, was untenable. "The church has a responsibility in these civic problems," he continued, "because ethics and morality are involved. You cannot divorce ethics and morality from social, economic, industrial and political problems." The church, he said

cannot be dumb and inactive in regard to slum conditions, sweat shops, child labor, profiteering, the war system, the indecent cinema and communism. All these militate against the coming of the kingdom of God among men and the development of human personality.¹

Dr. Wolf, who had both an M.A. and Ph.D. degree from Johns Hopkins University and had studied at Union Seminary in New York, outlined a six-point program for the church. First, he advocated a greater study of the prophets, apostles, and Jesus in areas of life not related exclusively to salvation. Second, he championed more preaching on social issues. Third, he urged the church to study social trends more carefully. Fourth, he recommended the education and training of church members for a greater effectiveness in the world. Fifth, he demanded the publication of findings of a social commission in order to "stir the people to more definite action as the particular local and state-wide problems may require." And finally, he urged the clergy to join civic groups with broader interests.²

Other churchmen echoed the call. The Rev. Henry Schuh, national stewardship director and later ALC president, confessed midway through the decade that the Lutheran church had been too aloof and had not influenced the community as it ought to have done.³ The Rev. John W.

¹Eastern District, ALC, Minutes (1936), p. 42.

²Ibid., pp. 47-48.

³"The Church's Work in the New Era," Lutheran Standard, August 31, 1935, pp. 6-7.

Scherzer, who was to play an important role in connection with the National Lutheran Council's post World War II relief program, called on the ALC to remember the laborer, whom he termed the forgotten man.¹ From other sources came severe attacks on the abuses of capitalism and calls for reform on behalf of the laborer and small farmer. Communism was even defended.² Sporadic attention to economic problems appeared in the districts.³

By the end of the 30's, however, major attention shifted from economic issues to the question of war. For a few Americans, the question of bearing arms proved to be a difficult one. Reu and Buehring had spoken of an easy solution for the vexing problem. In the first place, they believed that factors involved in a war were sufficiently simple so that they could be isolated to show which nation was the aggressor and which was not. On that basis one could determine whether or not the war was "just." Moreover, the two theologians contended, government officials knew better than the citizen whether a war was just or not, and the citizen should follow. If the government erred, it was not the citizen's fault.⁴ Such a view, of course, could nicely support, for example, Hitler's invasion of the Sudetenland. Even

¹"The Church's Work in the New Era," Lutheran Standard, August 31, 1935, pp. 4-5.

²C. B. Gohdes, "The Drama of the Constitution," ibid., October 2, 1937, pp. 5-6; A. Pilger, "How About Communism?", ibid., November 19, 1932, pp. 5-6, and December 10, 1932, pp. 5-6.

³Michigan District, ALC, Minutes (1936), pp. 53-66; Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1935), p. 21; Central District, ALC, ibid. (1934), p. 73; and Illinois District, ALC, ibid. pp. 43-44.

⁴Christian Ethics, p. 340.

a tyrannical government, Reu and Buehring wrote, was a "minister of God." Under such circumstances, the Christian patriot "may have much to grieve about . . . but he will bear it in patience, at the same time using all lawful means to bring about an improvement of conditions." Permission was granted the Christian to participate in armed revolt against the government if it no longer fulfilled its intended purpose as a force for good and if all peaceful means to reform it had failed. Moreover, the authors said that if the Christian citizen was "fully convinced that the cause for which his government and country have gone to war is an unjust one, he must obey his conscience, refuse to serve, and take the consequences."¹ Despite these qualifications, the net effect of this section of the Ethics was to encourage obedience to the state.

Opinion in the ALC seemed to be divided. When Professor Macintosh was denied citizenship for contending that his first allegiance was to God, Schramm protested in the Standard. In a rebuttal, a pastor criticized Schramm and said that once a nation had entered a war, it was the duty of the citizen to obey.² In a single issue of the Standard in 1934, three of the five main articles dealt with the subject of war.³

¹Christian Ethics, pp. 325 and 340.

²"Our First Allegiance," Lutheran Standard, February 8, 1930, p. 2; and William Schmidt, "Our First Allegiance Once More," ibid., March 15, 1930, p. 3.

³In connection with his 1934 survey, the Rev. Mr. Schramm had asked the question, "are you prepared personally to state that it is your present purpose not to sanction any future war or participate as an armed combatant?" Only 23 per cent had affirmed such intentions; 61 per cent replied negatively. In response to another question, 36 per cent indicated they thought the church should go on record refusing

With the outbreak of armed conflict in Europe, the dominant cry in the ALC was identical to that in the NLCA, namely neutrality. The 1940 California, Central, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin districts all adopted similar resolutions saying that United States safety did not lie in fighting European and Asiatic wars, nor could Europe be saved by endangering America. A plea was therefore sent to responsible officials in Congress and the administration asking them to keep the nation out of war. Minnesota took similar action in 1941. These were isolationist positions, however, not pacifist ones.¹ This isolationism continued to express itself in both the Standard and the districts until Pearl Harbor. After that event, the call was for obedience to the state with only an occasional feverish war cry.²

As a result of the agitation relating to the war, concern about the church's role in society reached a significant and climactic point. Meeting in Detroit in the fall of 1940, the ALC adopted a resolution confessing that "it is widely felt that our Church is in need of

to sanction or support future wars, while 51 per cent voted no. See "An Analysis of 700 Votes," Lutheran Standard, August 4, 1934, pp. 12-13. A 1934 Eastern District convention protested against war and urged that profit be taken out of the munitions industry. See Eastern District, ALC, Minutes (1934), p. 392.

¹California District, ALC, ibid. (1940), p. 7; Central District, ALC, ibid., p. 68; Illinois District, ALC, ibid., p. 57; Iowa District, ALC, ibid., p. 91; Michigan District, ALC, ibid., p. 69; Ohio District, ALC, ibid., pp. 58-59; Texas District, ALC, ibid., pp. 73-74; Wisconsin District, ALC, ibid., pp. 58-59; and Minnesota District, ALC, ibid. (1941), p. 50.

²[Schramm], "Is Our Nation Committing Suicide?", Lutheran Standard, May 24, 1941, p. 7; "America's Hour of Decision," ibid., June 14, 1941, pp. 6-7; "When Darkness Deepens," ibid., December 27, 1941, pp. 6-7; Dakota District, ALC, Minutes (1943), insert in minutes, no page number; Illinois District, ALC, ibid. (1942), p. 14; Ohio District, ALC, ibid., p. 70; Wisconsin District, ALC, ibid. (1944), p. 15; Minnesota District, ALC, ibid. (1943), p. 9; and Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1942), p. 15.

enlightenment on current social trends and problems . . ." and that "the Church has not been able adequately to express itself on trends and problems so vital to our people . . ." The delegates therefore voted to ask the ALC executive committee to serve as a commission to study current social trends and problems and to offer their guidance to the church. The request was made that special attention be given to the problem of conscientious objectors.¹ Out of this action the Board for Christian Social Action ultimately emerged.

This act represented a significant departure from the past tradition of quietism. The conscience of the church had been aroused. The tradition of the church did not offer the helpful guidance necessary for people living in a critical and complex age. The ALC therefore decided to study the matter and to chart a new path if necessary. With one war as only recent history, with another conflict threatening to spread across the Atlantic and engulf the United States, and with memories still fresh concerning the difficult experiences of a depression and a drought, the ALC was now ready to say officially for the first time that new direction was needed. A mere recitation of Luther's explanation to the first article of the creed extolling the goodness and mercy of the creator no longer sufficed in a moment of world crisis. With Mussolini in Ethiopia, Hitler in the Balkans, and Japan in China, the admonition that rulers generally could be trusted to decide whether or not a war was just and that it was the duty of the Christian to obey his leader, somehow did not seem to cover all the points involved in the dilemma of a people on the brink of a world conflict. With a sense of urgency amidst growing dissatisfaction, the door to a new day in the ALC was

¹ALC, Minutes (1940), p. 356.

officially opened. In opening the door, the ALC turned to a social action committee, not to her theological seminaries.

By this time the ALC had become Americanized. She was no longer part of a foreign element in a strange land. Even in the mid 30's, ALC leaders had pointed to the significance of this transition. Writing in 1934, a clergyman had asserted that American Lutheran isolation because of the language factor no longer existed.¹ A year later, Dr. Henry Schuh, stewardship director of the ALC, observed that a new day was dawning for the ALC as the church emerged from her language isolation. "In spite of all efforts, foreign languages and customs have disappeared," he wrote.² Or, as Editor Schramm expressed it in 1937, the American Lutheran Church was now truly American.³ Alert, therefore, to the problems of America on the world scene, the American Lutheran Church entered the decade of the 40's determined to become more informed concerning the social trends and to receive guidance concerning the complex social issues. The complete separation between the two spheres had begun to end. Quietism was to be replaced with a modified community activism.

As an additional sign of a new day, the Standard gave strong support to efforts to prepare for the peace. Much of the attention during the war years was devoted to this topic, especially as to how

¹O. H. Pannkoek, "The Individual and Society," Lutheran Standard, September 1, 1934, pp. 2-3.

²"God and Caesar," ibid., June 29, 1935, pp. 5-6.

³"Truly American," ibid., April 3, 1937, p. 10.

the churches could assist with rehabilitation.¹ Publicity was given to "A Statement on Germany" signed by a number of leading churchmen of whom Dr. John C. Bennett was chairman. The statement suggested four policy guidelines. First, that the discipline of Germany because of her crimes should not be controlled by a spirit of vindictiveness, but by a concern for European recovery and peace. Second, a dismemberment of Germany into separate states should not be imposed on that country. Third, United States policy in dealing with Germany should be calculated to strengthen the forces inside Germany which were committed to freedom and international cooperation. Fourth, while corrective and precautionary measures were to be taken respecting the menace of Nazism and militarism, efforts should nevertheless be made to enable the people of Germany to find for themselves the necessary economic conditions of life.² Walter Horton wrote, speaking not only of the guilt of the axis powers but also of the United States and said the allies must not penalize future generations by inflicting mass punishment on the defeated enemy.³

Articles described the movement of resistance to Hitler both in Germany and in Scandinavia. Bishop Wurm of Wurtemberg and Bishop Berggrav of Norway received special attention.⁴ Dr. Visser 't Hooft,

¹See, for example, "Speaking of Peace," Lutheran Standard, September 26, 1942, p. 7; and "We Can Do It Again," ibid., January 22, 1944, p. 8. See also J. Sheatsley, "Signs of the Times," ibid., April 25, 1942, p. 6; and "The Church and the World," ibid., May 2, 1942, p. 4.

²"A Statement on Germany," ibid., October 14, 1944, pp. 4-5.

³"Who Is To Blame for the War?," ibid., May 6, 1944, p. 4; and "Punishment and Forgiveness," ibid., May 13, 1944, pp. 3-4.

⁴Henry Smith Leiper, "Ten Years of Religion Under Hitler," ibid., June 19, 1943, pp. 4-5. See also "Tested and Not Found Wanting," ibid.,

writing about the effect of the war on Europe, said that the European churches had "discovered that the church has a mission to fulfill in relation to public life; they have recognized that there is no such thing as the autonomy of politics or of economics, . . ."¹

The lessons of Europe had apparently become the lessons of the United States. In 1944 fifty Lutheran leaders gathered to discuss the social mission of the church. Membership included representatives from the Missouri Synod as well as the other major Lutheran groups. The findings were reported to be unanimous. First the group reportedly asserted what they termed to be a "deep, earnest, and creative concern" in the Lutheran church to understand, accept, and discharge its full mission to the social order. Second, they reportedly listed the key areas concerning which the church should express special attention:

We find that prominent among the problems to which we must apply the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, are those of labor-management tensions, race conflicts, delinquency, family disorganization, divorce, war, gambling, evil penal and detention practices, illiteracy, personality-debasing political and economic ideologies, corruption of public office, alcoholism, anti-semitism, prostitution.²

The list illustrates well the broadening social responsibility of Lutherans as they self-consciously sought to relate themselves to new areas of life.

The economic, military, and political events in the world were thus helping to move the ALC in a new direction. The rise of nazism in

July 24, 1943, pp. 4-5; and "Norway Stands Firm," Lutheran Standard, August 22, 1942, p. 6.

¹W. A. Visser 't Hooft, "The Future of Europe," ibid., January 29, 1944, p. 4.

²Winfred Elson, "Lutheran Leaders Confer on Social Missions," ibid., March 11, 1944, pp. 12-13.

Europe also helped focus the attention of American Lutherans on race relations, both Jewish and Negro. In this connection, the editor of the Lutheran Standard became momentarily sidetracked as the editor of the Lutheran Herald had also become. Early in 1936, the Standard printed an article which sought to lay the responsibility for the international communist conspiracy at the feet of the Jews. To be sure, the writer said that not all Jews belonged to the conspiracy. But at the center of the communist conspiracy was a set of Jewish international financiers who simply used some Gentiles as "dupes," the article said. The author, E. A. Dobberstein, even went so far as to suggest that the persons being deprived of property in Russia were Gentiles, not Jews, and that churches were being closed while synagogues remained open.¹

A month later, E. W. Schramm, the Standard editor, apologized for having printed the article. He said that he had not intended to stir up anti-semitism and that he was sorry this had occurred. He contended that he had not screened the Dobberstein article sufficiently carefully and that he knew little about the subject. He said he had asked forgiveness from those whom he had offended and was now doing so publicly. With the publication of a reply to Dobberstein, Schramm intended to close the issue.² The response to Dobberstein's article charged that much of the material for it had been taken from "Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion," which were said to be forgeries and to have

¹"The World Plot of Communism," Lutheran Standard, February 2, 1935, pp. 7-9.

²"Communism's Real Father," ibid., March 7, 1936, p. 3.

caused the death of 120,000 Jews in Southern Russia.¹ Little specific attention was paid to the Jewish question in the Standard thereafter.²

Some attention was also given to the treatment of the Negro. From the beginning of its history, the ALC conducted some segregated Negro work in the south. An academy for Negroes had been started in 1916. By 1931, more than 100 students were registered. In 1933, the ALC had ten Negro mission stations with approximately 1,000 members. That year, the ALC cut its apportionment for Negro work from \$21,000 to \$12,000. By June, it was reported, only the January payment had been made. Yet the stations and schools were determined to remain open.³

In 1938, the Texas District passed a resolution asking the ALC to amend its rules regarding segregation to allow two Puerto Rican native clergymen who were working in Mexico, to be admitted to the district. A part of the resolution read as follows:

the rule of the ALC referred to above was originally adopted with special reference to ordained Negro pastors and was later made to include ordained Mexican pastors in the apparent erroneous assumption that the two race problems involved are identical.⁴

There are no resolutions in that district during this period asking for

¹J. S. Dallmann, "Why Single Out The Jews?", Lutheran Standard, March 7, 1936, pp. 8-9.

²In a church which had long held to a sharp separation of church and state, the plea of ignorance on the part of a clergyman concerning affairs of state could be accepted with ease. One need be informed only about such matters as those for which one had some responsibility. The episode and the plea therefore poignantly illustrate both the dilemma and the danger for both church and state inherent in a quietism that could nurture "lack of knowledge" in its bosom.

³See Claudius Freseman and Carl Heminhaus, "Our Work among the Colored Folk," ibid., August 16, 1930, p. 4; and H. F. Richards, "Colored Mission Work in 1933," ibid., February 18, 1933, p. 4; "Colored Mission Notes," ibid., June 10, 1933, pp. 4-5; and "Colored Mission Work," ibid., August 27, 1932, p. 7.

⁴Texas District, ALC, Minutes (1938), p. 91.

similar treatment of the Negroes, nor is there any reference to the request in the ALC executive committee minutes.

During this period, it appears as though the ALC had no serious intention to break the color barrier. At the 1938 convention, the Board of Colored Missions, while complaining about their meager \$11,500 annual budget and repeated failures to secure additional funds, issued a statement of policy. Purpose of the Negro work, the statement said, was to develop a "self-governing Afro-American Lutheran Church that will be soundly Lutheran in doctrine and purpose."¹ Two years later the ALC voted to join other Lutheran bodies in cooperative Negro work.² No proposal was presented, however, to break the pattern of segregation.

In 1943, a strong appeal was made to the Eastern District convention to eliminate racial prejudice. The Rev. Otto Schuetze, who had served parishes in Pittsburgh and Baltimore, told the convention prophetically:

We have freed the negro but have denied him equality of opportunity; we have admitted Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans into our country, have permitted some of them to become citizens, but have ostracized them from our society. . . . Racial and color lines are being more and more sharply drawn and it appears that unless a solution is found the racial groups will rise up to revolt against all whom they consider their oppressors . . .³

Despite this clear summons, there is little by way of convention action or published articles to suggest that the view of Schuetze was widely held in the ALC at this time. Like the other churches, the ALC was slow to become aroused about this issue. Editor Schramm rather hesitantly raised the question of integration in the churches. He called

¹ALC, Minutes (1938), p. 162.

²Ibid. (1940), pp. 195-196, 343-345, and 291-293.

³Eastern District, ALC, Minutes (1943), p. 39.

it "A Ticklish Question," and conceded that if integration were to take place, most of the people would leave the church.¹ The article was written on May 6, 1944, only ten years prior to the historic Supreme Court decision.

Very little interest was shown in prohibition during this era. Minor attention was paid to birth control.²

As this fifteen-year period ends, one can note the beginning of a departure from the quietism of the past. World and national political, military, and economic events were making an impact on the ALC. From a position which advocated a fairly rigid separation of the spheres of church and state, the ALC moved to a position where she asserted the inter-relationship of the two and officially accepted responsibility for moral guidance to her members and to society on the important political, social, and economic issues of the day. In fact, the editor of the Lutheran Standard went so far as to say editorially in 1944 that "FUTURE CHURCH HISTORIANS may discover that the year 1944 was a transitional year for the Lutheran Church in America, at least in one domain, namely

¹[Schramm], "A Ticklish Question," Lutheran Standard, May 6, 1944, p. 7.

²[Schramm], "Can the United States Be Made a Sober Nation?", ibid., January 11, 1930, pp. 2-3; H. T. Weber, "Is Prohibition Scriptural?", ibid., October 23, 1932, pp. 8-9; William Schoeler, "Where Would Jesus Stand on Prohibition?", ibid., October 8, 1932, p. 5; [Schramm], "What about Prohibition?", ibid., August 13, 1932, pp. 6-7; [Schramm], "When Is a Man Drunk?", ibid., May 30, 1936, p. 6; "Ende der Nationalen Prohibition," Kirchliche Zeitschrift, 58 (January, 1934), pp. 48-50. Articles either explaining, opposing or advocating birth control appeared in both the Standard and the Zeitschrift. See for example, G. B. Gohdes, "Three Burning Questions," Lutheran Standard, September 17, 1932, pp. 5-6; "Geburtenkontrolle," Kirchliche Zeitschrift, 55 (May, 1931), pp. 313ff; and "Geburtenkontrolle als Hilfsmittel gegen die Depression?", ibid., 58 (January, 1934), pp. 50-51.

in a new awareness of social responsibility."¹ Dr. Schramm chose 1944 because he said there were more references that year in Lutheran churches to social issues than in any previous year. Reflecting this was the fact that the ALC had spotlighted the problem of church and labor at its public mass meeting held on the first night of its national convention. The judgment of Dr. Schramm seems correct in the sense that the ALC was standing on the threshold of a new era.

¹"A Transitional Year," Lutheran Standard, December 30, 1944, p. 8.

CHAPTER IV
THE AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Introduction

New ideas found expression more freely among the Augustana Lutheran clergy during this period than had been the case in the NLCA and ALC. As the Swedish Lutherans began to take a second look at their understanding of social issues, new concerns began to arise and to run parallel with older views.

The older position dominated at the beginning of the period and was represented by Augustana's president, G. A. Brandelle. Not until 1933 did he refer in his annual report to the depression, about which many church members struggled daily. Then he spoke in only very general terms. The depression had resulted from man's sin, Brandelle said, therefore rehabilitation would be hastened by repenting.¹ A resolution adopted by the convention referred to the depression in Troeltsch's terms as "the present chastening" and thanked God

that His purpose in permitting this visitation to come upon us has been attained with regard to large numbers of our people as is evidenced by increased attendance at divine worship and by larger communions; and that men and women have turned unto the Lord, owned Him as their Saviour, and been strengthened to serve Him.²

¹The Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod of North America, Minutes (Rock Island, 1938), pp. 11-12.

²Ibid., p. 24.

No figures were provided to verify the statement.¹

Two years earlier Brandelle had been able to express a very favorable judgment concerning members of Augustana. Even though he had criticized the social gospel for naive optimism with respect to human nature, he could tell the convention: "As to the general morality of our members, there are no particular complaints." He cited only the use of liquor, the dance, and card games as growing menaces of the day. He called on the church to "resist unto death the return of the legalized liquor traffic." There is no data, however, to suggest that he took his own counsel literally, nor did the convention adopt a resolution embodying such noble sentiments. While devoid of references to the depression and the plight of the unemployed, the 1931 convention did devote considerable time to a discussion of "statistical blanks"--forms on which congregations were to submit their reports to synodical headquarters.²

While quietism prevailed,³ changes were occurring. S. J.

¹An article in the Augustana Quarterly reported that the depression had not brought a sizeable increase in church membership. See Carl A. Glad, in "The Church Facing the New Year: A Symposium," ibid., XII (January, 1933), p. 17. In addition, at the 1939 Augustana Convention, President P. O. Bersell said that the "great spiritual revival" hoped for as a result of the depression "has not come yet" and that "a very large proportion of our own members do not attend even one service on the Lord's Day with regularity." Augustana, Minutes (1939), p. 16. Bersell's statement corresponds to the findings of Robert M. Miller. See Miller, American Protestantism and Social Issues: 1919-1939 (Chapel Hill, 1958), p. 63.

²Augustana, Minutes (1931), p. 14.

³H. P. Linner, "Christian Citizenship," Augustana Quarterly, IX (October, 1930), pp. 309-313; Herbert Swanson, in "Is the Message of the Pulpit Meeting the Needs of the Day?", ibid., XIII (July, 1934), pp. 219-222; Leonard Kendall, "Where Are We?", ibid., XIV (January, 1935), pp. 70-77; and Herman G. Nelson, "Relation of the Pulpit to Politics," ibid., XIII (January, 1934), pp. 50-55.

Sebelius, one-time dean at Augustana Seminary, reported on the results of a questionnaire he had sent to fifty prominent Augustana clergymen. Sebelius wrote that "not a few" said they gave more attention in preaching to present-day problems than previously had been the case. The chief factor influencing this change was said to have been World War I.¹

One writer described the Stockholm conference as the church's confession of sin for its neglect of the social arena. He noted a similar attitude at the Copenhagen meeting of the Lutheran World Convention, which had alerted Lutherans to the fact that they would not neglect the world and its social problems, he said.²

Most writers tended to suggest that more thought be given toward applying the gospel to specific reforms. The question seemed to center around how far the church ought to go in this direction. "The times are out of joint. Much in our social order is wrong. The inequalities and injustices of the day are enough to stir the blood of any man who loves righteousness and fair play," a Chicago clergyman wrote. He agreed that the indictment of current social and economic conditions by social gospel leaders was valid.³

As the debate concerning social involvement continued, the position of four men becomes important to note. The first of these was Oscar Olson, editor of the Augustana Quarterly. In the midst of tumultuous economic and social upheavals, Olson observed what Hopkins and

¹"Preaching in Our Synod," Augustana Quarterly, IX (April, 1930), pp. 113-129.

²Oscar N. Olson, "The Second Lutheran World Convention," ibid., IX (January, 1930), pp. 58-74.

³C. G. H. Almquist, "Is the Message of the Pulpit Meeting the Needs of Today?", Augustana Quarterly, XIII (July, 1934), pp. 205-215.

May had observed about an earlier era, namely that the church was being affected by the economic and social changes. Among the host of problems which Olson listed were equitable distribution of wealth, widespread want, selfish misuse of wealth, corruption and dishonesty in politics and business, ruthless competition, a disregard for human values and welfare, and unemployment. In crying for solution, these problems were impinging upon the conscience of the church and arousing it to a greater concern. Olson admitted that "a one-sided emphasis on the inner life and personal salvation has often drawn the Church into a mystic aloofness from the realities of life," a direction which did not appeal to him. Writing in a fashion new to Lutheran readers--reminiscent of social gospel language--Olson called on the church to recognize her duty to reform society, without attempting establishment of a theocratic state.¹

About the time Olson was calling for the Christianizing of society, the Rev. C. J. Sodergren of the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis called for "Christianizing human relationships." He expressed great despair because of "the heartless cruelty of man to man in selfish competition," and said that despite "an uneasy conscience," the church stood "confessedly impotent to make more than a dent in the armor of a commercialized civilization." After condoning World War I and tacitly sanctioning the arms build-up, the church, he said, did not "inspire confidence among the submerged masses nor minister to their actual needs."² The situation was so severe, Sodergren maintained,

¹"The Position of the Church in the Present World," Augustana Quarterly, XIV (January, 1935), pp. 40-53.

²"Christianizing Human Relationships," ibid. (April, 1935), pp. 139-147. See especially pp. 140-141.

that the Lutheran position of ameliorative welfare was no longer adequate. "Salvaging damaged bodies is only so much ambulance chasing, as long as the economic structure is grinding out victims by the wholesale," he charged. He saw the church functioning well as a "soul saving agent," but "as a socially leavening power the organization is failing." He called for a complete transformation of society through the power of Christ:

What our hearts cry out for is not amelioration, improvement, or uplift. Nothing less than a radical change and a general metamorphosis of the entire industrial, political, and social system will answer. The times are out of joint, and the situation demands a complete regeneration. Bandaging, dosing, and even amputating does not effect a cure. Charity, no matter how judiciously administered, leaves us behind in the race.¹

Socialism should be regarded as a genuine option for individual workmen trying to forge new plans, Sodergren maintained, saying that the protest of socialism "where others are silent, merits serious attention, while we continue to beware of the Communistic debacle in Russia." Public ownership and control of natural resources "would not necessarily be treason," he contended, although he doubted that such action would aid greatly in the present crisis. Moreover, he said, clergymen ought to be trained in "social service" courses at the seminaries in order to teach them how to apply the gospel to actual situations.²

Such speech was new and different. It sounded more like Rauschenbusch--to whom Sodergren referred without castigation--than the traditional Lutheran. Not only were individual Christians to be redeemed, but society itself was to be rescued and remade. The Lutheran

¹Sodergren, "Christianizing Human Relationships," Augustana Quarterly, XIV (April, 1935), p. 141.

²Ibid., pp. 145-147.

Bible Institute was an inter-synodical Lutheran Bible school with ultra conservative and fundamentalist sympathies. That such a statement could come from one of their most influential teachers suggests a significant inroad on traditional Lutheran viewpoints.

The strongest plea for a restatement of Lutheran social theory during this period came from A. D. Mattson, professor of ethics at Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois. He argued in two directions. He thought it was wrong to say that moral character could be improved merely by social reform and improved environment. He also thought it wrong to cultivate "merely a private type of piety." He continued:

We must definitely insist upon that God be allowed to rule in the public as well as in the private affairs of men. We need not fear that an insistence upon the social application of the gospel will tend to minimize the importance of individual salvation. Both processes work harmoniously together.¹

Referring to the fact that Augustana had spent large sums of money for charitable institutions, Mattson suggested that attention be focused in a new direction:

But would it not be better, while not leaving the first undone, to apply ourselves more earnestly to seeking correction for the conditions which make charity necessary . . . my conviction is that the Church has been remiss in enlightening the conscience with respect to social obligations, as well as with respect to supplying a needed enthusiasm and passion for social righteousness. . . . The Church deals with the individual, who is both a church member and a citizen, and the Church should so enlighten its members that when they go out into the various social relations of life, they will apply to those relations, the spirit of Christ. The Church has a right to expect of its members that they cease being pagans in the political theories which they endorse or bring about, as well as in all other spheres of social

¹"Is The Church Fulfilling its Mission in Present Day Society?", Augustana Quarterly, XIII (October, 1934), p. 304.

activity. The Christian legislator must not forget his religion in the legislative hall, the Christian businessman must not assume the attitude that "religion is religion and business is business," the Christian factory owner must not exploit, men, women, and children in his industrial plant, and the Christian citizen must not forget that he is a Christian when he goes to the polls. Have we stressed sufficiently these things as a Church?¹

Like leaders of the social gospel, Mattson claimed the authority of the Old Testament as well as of Jesus for his contention that the church had a mission to society. Like Stuckenberg, he claimed New Testament data for the study of sociology:

I make bold to state that there is more material for sociology than for theology in the New Testament. The Kingdom of God, which lies at the very heart of the gospel of Christ and is mentioned at least 141 times in the New Testament, is, among other things, a social concept. The parable of the seed growing secretly, and the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, emphasize the fact that the Kingdom of God is not only something transcendent but also something . . . destined to influence society.

The ultimate realization of the kingdom lay in God's hands, Mattson argued. He dismissed questions concerning progress as "academic." Instead of debating the latter, the church should concern itself with "marching orders," he said.² It is clear that the emphasis Mattson reflected as he helped to train future Augustana clergy stood in marked contrast to the emphasis being given the ALC by Reu and Buehring.

The other leader in this era was Karl Mattson, brother of A. D. Mattson and later president of Augustana Seminary. He argued that Reinhold Niebuhr was correct in allegedly saying that modern man's problem was not intellectual but ethical. For modern man, Mattson wrote, "the ethical problem is the great one. It is largely on the basis

¹A. D. Mattson, "Is the Church Fulfilling its Mission in Present Day Society?", Augustana Quarterly, XIII (October, 1934), pp. 305-306.

²Ibid., pp. 303-304.

of ethical insight that he can not make Christianity relevant to life."¹ Mattson therefore called on the church to make her insights meaningful to modern man at the level on which he lived. He proposed a reorientation of theology by focusing on the field of ethics.

These new trends in Augustana were accurately described by Dr. J. P. Milton, pastor of First Lutheran Church in St. Paul, in an article entitled, "The Augustana Pastor of Tomorrow." Milton said the new pastor would be characterized, among other things, by a "social emphasis, the emphasis on the social teachings of the prophets and of Jesus." He admitted that Augustana had been reticent to adopt such an emphasis because of what he termed the failure of the social gospel. In fact, he said that "the Augustana pastor of yesterday and of today has not been a preacher of the social gospel." Change, however, was said to be needed in order to give enlightenment and guidance to the Christian conscience concerning social problems. "I am convinced that the Augustana pastor of tomorrow will necessarily have to declare himself on many social issues," Milton said. "In this sense," he continued, "we shall need again, even as we do now, the voice of the prophet, the voice of an Amos and of an Isaiah, in the land in which we live."²

With this kind of emphasis on the rise within the Augustana church, it is not surprising that in 1936 the Augustana Synod took its first significant official step in expressing its new social concern. Following the receipt of a petition from the Minnesota Conference and

¹Karl Mattson, "The Ethical Problem in the Modern Scientific World," Augustana Quarterly, XIV (July, 1935), pp. 267-270.

²"The Augustana Pastor of Tomorrow," ibid., XV (July, 1936), pp. 195-204.

the endorsement of President P. O. Bersell, the convention voted to establish a Commission on Morals and Social Problems. The following year, it was expanded into a permanent six-man commission.¹

A Dual Focus: Alcohol and Jobs

The Commission on Morals and Social Problems began its work in fairly familiar territory. In 1938, its chairman, A. D. Mattson, presented three statements to the convention. Two referred to liquor and gambling while the third related to employer-employee relationships. The resolutions concerning liquor and gambling were adopted, whereas the one dealing with labor was referred back to the committee.² In acting on the first two, Augustana was simply being true to her heritage. Resolutions opposing the liquor industry had been adopted at several annual synodical conventions. The campaign to repeal the eighteenth amendment had been called "the most deceptive propaganda ever conceived by the powers of evil."³ Almost the only item of social concern considered by any of the twelve conferences in the early 30's related to liquor.⁴ In fact, Augustana expressed a greater concern about alcohol

¹Augustana, Minutes (1936), pp. 25 and 192; and (1937), p. 238.

²Ibid. (1938), pp. 222-225.

³Ibid. (1934), p. 26. See also ibid. (1931), p. 21; (1932), p. 23; and (1933), pp. 23 and 26.

⁴Other items briefly considered included a 1935 California Conference resolution expressing approval of the work of a citizen's committee to care for the narcotic addict and calling for penalties for the "illegal narcotic trafficker." See California Conference, Augustana Synod, Minutes (1935), p. 19. In 1931, the Iowa Conference condemned birth control. See Iowa Conference, ibid. (1931), p. 87. In 1932, the Minnesota Conference voted to deplore cards, dances, movies, and the "desecration of the Lord's Day." See Minnesota Conference, ibid. (1932), p. 27. In 1931, the New England Conference voted to express its opposition to "unnatural and artificial birth control." See New England Conference, ibid. (1931), p. 74. In 1930, the New York

than did any other Lutheran body.

In 1934, the California Conference said church members should assist in the enforcement of the eighteenth amendment. During each of the succeeding three years, the same conference voted to "consistently oppose" any effort for repeal.¹ Speaking to the same question, the Illinois Conference voted in 1930 to express "gratefulness to Almighty God for the success of the forces of righteousness in our land" The conference commended the dry forces and the Anti-Saloon League for providing information to the voters concerning candidates' attitudes toward the liquor issue, "thus helping us to vote more intelligently." The following year the delegates voted to "renew our consecration to the cause of temperance" as a part of the church's program and for the "advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth." In 1932, they deplored efforts to discredit the eighteenth amendment and urged continued support of the Anti-Saloon League. A year later, they were advocating an intensive drive on behalf of local option and affirming their belief that the battle against alcohol had not been lost despite a setback. In 1934 they voted to instruct the youth and men's auxiliaries of the church to conduct educational programs among their members on what was termed the evils of alcohol. The pattern continued.²

Conference voted to ask parents to "prayerfully" consider the fascination in dances and cards on the part of their children. See New York Conference, Minutes (1930), p. 22.

¹California Conference, ibid., p. 41; (1931), p. 21; (1932), p. 34; and (1933), p. 3.

²Illinois Conference, ibid. (1930), pp. 111-112; (1931), p. 117; (1932), p. 109; (1933), p. 112; (1934), pp. 27 and 107; (1935), pp. 27, and 124-125; and (1936), p. 13.

Iowa voted in 1930 and 1931 to support the Volstead Act. "Prohibition at its worst is better than the open sale of liquor," the delegates said. Iowa Conference President P. O. Bersell called on church members in 1933 to vote only for candidates "pledged to the retention of the Eighteenth amendment." Two years later, because of despair over what they considered the liquor evil, the conference voted to establish a Commission on Morals. Included among the commission's first instructions were directives to fight for temperance and to oppose Roosevelt's presidential Charity Ball.¹

Augustana delegates at the Kansas conference expressed their preference for prohibition also. In fact the issue was considered to be so serious and of such a high moral nature that the conference president defended this unusual entry into the public arena with the following statement:

while Church and State stand separated from each other and while our Church holds strictly to the principle of not entering into political problems of our land, yet we must recognize that when political issues also become definitely moral issues it behooves us as professing Christians to express ourselves and to take a stand even though it is a question that is primarily political.²

In five conventions the delegates voted to endorse the prohibition cause.³

¹Iowa Conference, Minutes (1930), p. 90; (1931), p. 94; (1933), pp. 18 and 25; and (1935), p. 23.

²Kansas Conference, ibid. (1932), pp. 15-16. The statement illustrates what had been true for some time: Lutherans did tend to act publicly on issues they considered to be moral. It would appear that the reason for inaction on such fronts as labor relations and race, for example, was perhaps because the Augustana members did not consider these to be "definitely moral issues" as the gentleman from Kansas understood liquor to be.

³Ibid. (1930), p. 23; (1932), p. 19; (1933), pp. 20-21; (1934), p. 66; and (1935), p. 67.

For a time of moral and economic crisis, the Minnesota president's report in 1930 was remarkably calm and optimistic. "From a moral viewpoint our people have a good report," the president said. "They are known in their communities as honest and upright in their dealings with their fellow men, live in harmony and peace with them and earn their bread in the sweat of their brow." There were, he admitted, "shadows in our social and religious life," namely dancing, drinking, and attending Sunday baseball games. The Minnesota Conference repeatedly voted its support of prohibition and denounced the liquor industry in a futile attempt to rid the country of one of the "shadows."¹

Other conferences expressed similar sentiments. Nebraska, New York, Red River Valley, and Superior acted in support of this conservative cause.² Thus, in adopting the resolution opposed to the liquor industry at its 1938 convention, Augustana was articulating a social concern which was shared rather widely in that synod. In fact, even after 1938, articles and resolutions concerning the use of alcohol appeared frequently at conference meetings and in the church press.

The issue which was referred back to committee at the 1938 national convention of the Augustana Synod dealt with the problems of labor and management. The commission report, like that presented to

¹Minnesota Conference, Minutes (1930), pp. 24 and 156; (1931), pp. 35-36; (1932), pp. 27-29; (1933), p. 90; (1934), pp. 28-29; and (1935), pp. 97-98.

²Nebraska Conference, ibid. (1933), p. 23; (1934), p. 13; New England Conference, ibid. (1930), p. 88; (1932), p. 31; (1933), p. 29; New York Conference, ibid. (1936), pp. 59-60; Red River Valley Conference, ibid. (1931), p. 60; (1932), p. 53; (1934), p. 44; (1935), p. 44; (1936), pp. 50-51; Superior Conference, ibid. (1930), p. 57; and (1936), p. 55.

the American Lutheran Conference,¹ had endorsed a section of the Oxford Life and Work conference statement. Among the affirmations in the statement were those saying that "labor has intrinsic worth and dignity," that labor "should never be considered a mere commodity," and that the working man was entitled to a living wage. The statement had also endorsed the right to organize for collective bargaining, methods to safeguard the workers physically while on the job, and insurance against illness, accidents, old age, and unemployment. In addition, the abolition of child labor had been recommended, as well as reduction in hours of employment as industrial productivity increased. Both employee and employer were exhorted to work for the common good.²

The labor question was back at the convention the following year. This time President Bersell urged the convention to adopt the statement which had been only slightly altered from the text submitted the previous year. The president urged the delegates "to speak fearlessly and use our influence to the utmost" on questions relating to capital and labor, as well as to war and peace, liquor, and religious liberty. The convention voted to accept the social commission's report.

The statement said that the church had "the duty to supply guidance to the consciences of men on the pressing moral problems of the age" through the preaching of the Word. The tension between capital and labor could be removed only through the gospel of forgiveness, it said. Sections of the Oxford statement were accepted, although revised to give greater emphasis to individual responsibility. For example, the

¹See supra, p. 61.

²Augustana, Minutes (1938), p. 224.

endorsement of insurance against sickness was qualified by the phrase, "without diminishing personal responsibility."¹

No further attempts were made by Augustana during this period to adopt statements concerning the field of labor and management. The conferences were equally silent on the matter.²

Only minor attention was given to labor questions in the Augustana publications. In one of the most insensitive articles to appear in the Augustana press, the Lutheran Companion remarked editorially during the depression that "it would be a bad precedent for the state to begin to feed any large percent of its citizens when not even 12 percent of the wage earners are idle." In a statement reminiscent of Henry Ward Beecher's³ famous salute to the working man, the editorial suggested there was an unwillingness among people

to assist such who suffer temporarily from economic conditions that could have been evaded if, in their opinion, those responsible would have paid more heed to the law of supply and demand and if the people generally had been satisfied to live well rather than live too high. It is no credit to the laborers that they have not laid

¹Augustana, Minutes (1939), pp. 27-28 and 264.

²In 1936, the Minnesota Conference expressed concern about the fact that 1 per cent of the population controlled more wealth than the other 99 per cent. The convention voted to deplore this and expressed concern in a general way for social justice. The other conferences devoted their attention to other issues during this period. See Minnesota Conference, Minutes (1936), pp. 23 and 34. The Companion editorially criticized the 1935 Federal Council of Churches Labor Day statement because it was said to have suggested the abundant life included material well-being. See "Notable Labor Utterance," Lutheran Companion, September 14, 1935, p. 1155.

³Henry May quotes Beecher as telling a man with five or six children that he ought to be able to live on one dollar a day. "But is not a dollar enough to buy bread with? Water costs nothing, and a man who cannot live on bread is not fit to live." Quoted in May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America, p. 94.

aside enough, when work was plenty and wages high, to keep them comfortable for a few months of unemployment.¹

The persons on behalf of whom the Lutheran Companion paid particular attention were clergymen, although this ecclesiastical bias was not limited to Augustana.

When E. E. Ryden became editor of the Companion early in 1934, the situation changed somewhat, although Ryden was not an ardent champion of the working man. When writing on the farm problem during his first year in office, Ryden suggested that drought was God's way of removing a surplus and implied that Roosevelt's farm brain trust ought to recognize this factor rather than pay farmers to destroy pigs. In most labor-management disputes, Ryden displayed a tendency to be more concerned about the general public than with either of the two disputants. Hence he frequently called for the settlement of disputes through compulsory arbitration.²


One of the more impassioned pleas for the laborer came from the Rev. Joseph E. Lonnquist, pastor in the mining city of Anaconda, Montana. He described 25,000,000 people in rags with sore and hungry stomachs, and taunted the clergy for their sophistication, easy life, soft chairs, and nice robes. He suggested the clergy break their isolation and join the

¹"Is the State To Bear Everything?", Lutheran Companion, February 21, 1931, pp. 228-229.

²[Ryden], "Social Unrest Disturbing," ibid., August 11, 1934, p. 995; "Supreme Court Outlaws NRA," ibid., June 8, 1935, p. 709; "God and the Farm Surplus," ibid., June 9, 1934, p. 707; and "Human Rights and Property," ibid., April 14, 1934, p. 451. See also "The Church's Duty in Time of Depression," ibid., October 31, 1931, pp. 1379-1380; "Ministerial Unemployment," ibid., June 27, 1931, pp. 803-804; "Child Labor Is Still a Matter of Concern," ibid., September 5, 1931, p. 1125; "To Pay Dividends to Stockholders," ibid., August 16, 1930, p. 1029; and "The Economic Situation," ibid., May 8, 1930, p. 1412.

force of laboring men who wielded picks and shovels and that they sweat a bit among men who chewed tobacco and swore. He said that

it is better for a preacher to preach the gospel truth to one person than to humor five hundred. . . . It is better to pray a little less and to spit in one's hand a little more . . . demanding of a dead world what Jesus demanded, a fair chance for all, big or little, "rich" and poor. That, if you please, is also the church's business . . . show me, dear reader, where God said that He meant the earth to be a hell for man's body, and the eternities a hell for his soul.¹

 A second Montana pastor wrote that the church had given the impression of upholding capitalism with all its evils while speaking empty words designed to soothe the oppressed.

Some day, I dare to predict, people will wonder how ministers of the gospel, supposedly intelligent, honest, and sincere, could continue to defend and justify a system that enabled a few individuals to grow enormously rich while millions in the same country were on the verge of starvation.²

Dr. Paul Andreen, an Augustana clergyman in Minnesota agreed that Lutheranism was, in part, responsible for the hostility of labor to the church because Lutherans had taught that "its work was the salvation of the soul, and that it had no temporal message for a struggling world of laborers and employers." He charged that many Lutherans did not see the responsibilities which were theirs because of the economic and social problems facing the nation. While he pointedly refused to identify Christianity with a particular social form, Andreen rejected completely the idea that the Christian was to be passive toward matters relating to the state. Instead, he argued that "no

¹Joseph E. Lonnquist, "Which Way Out, Man's Way or God's?", Augustana Quarterly, XV (July, 1936), p. 261.

²Emeroy Johnson, "Are We on a Sinking Ship, and if so, What Can We Do About It?", ibid., XV (January, 1936), p. 69. See also Herbert Willet, "How Far Is the Church Responsible for the Antagonism of the World?", ibid., XVII (January, 1938), pp. 3-12.

Christian is or can be released from the obligations of Christian citizenship, and he must ever labor for the best possible social arrangement for the ordering of life" With 12,000,000 people unemployed and 20,000,000 people wholly or partially supported by relief, Andreen contended that "no other national problem approaches in importance that of labor and unemployment."¹

Despite an occasional word, however, it would have to be said that interest in capital and labor problems played a somewhat minor role in the debates on social issues which were beginning to characterize the Augustana Synod. Of the two concerns, whether a man drank liquor seems to have been more important than whether a man had a job.

A Single Cause: War and Peace

Immediately after he became editor of the Lutheran Companion in 1934, E. E. Ryden launched a crusade against war on behalf of peace. He urged the United States to join the League of Nations and the Court of International Justice and proposed that the country prohibit the manufacture of war munitions. He printed an article by Kirby Page seeking to show that 38 per cent of the Lutheran clergy responding to Page's questionnaire refused to sanction war. When the Lutheran Pastors of Greater Boston voted to urge a constitutional amendment referring a declaration of war to a popular referendum, Ryden gave his support. When Italy marched into Ethiopia, Ryden suggested that if the League of

¹Paul Andreen, "The Lutheran Church and the Modern Labor Problem," Augustana Quarterly, XVIII (July, 1939), pp. 215-233, especially pp. 220, 232, and 221. See also Andreen, The Clash (Minneapolis, 1938); and Conrad Peterson, "The Church Faces the Modern World," Augustana Quarterly, XXII (July, 1943), pp. 214-225.

Nations could be freed from enforcing the Versailles Treaty, which he thought was unfair, it might still lead mankind to the realization of its dream of peace.¹

The Nye committee was lauded for its investigation of munitions makers. The Fellowship of Reconciliation was endorsed as "the most consistently Christian expression of constructive and aggressive will to peace." Pacifism was defended and neutrality was exalted.²

The Companion was highly critical of the Versailles Treaty. The editor argued that if war broke out in Europe, it would not be Germany's exclusive fault because of the treaty and its aftermath. He even defended the right of Germany to reclaim former territory on which Germans lived since it had been unfairly wrenched from her in the first place. When Chamberlain began to seek solutions for the German problem with Hitler, the Companion endorsed his efforts. Peace was said to be a little closer in Europe now that some of the wrongs of the Versailles Treaty were to be reviewed.³

¹[E. E. Ryden], "War Issue Comes before Synod," Lutheran Companion, June 9, 1934, p. 707; Kirby Page, "Ministers Speak Their Mind," ibid., May 26, 1934, pp. 649-650; S. G. Hägglund, "The People and War," ibid., April 8, 1937, p. 463; and [Ryden], "Lutheran Pastors in Peace Effort," ibid., April 22, 1937, p. 515; "Synod Endorses Vote on War," ibid., July 8, 1937, p. 867; "League of Nations in Crucial Test," ibid., May 2, 1936, p. 547; "America To Join World Court," ibid., February 2, 1935, p. 131; and "A Crime against Humanity," ibid., August 3, 1935, p. 963.

²Lynn Ash, "The Curse of War," ibid., May 25, 1935, pp. 646-647; Arthur Wald, "Peace Action," ibid., November 21, 1936, p. 1483; and G. Everett Arden, "What about War?," ibid., March 14, 1936, pp. 327-330.

³See [Ryden], "Beating War Drums in Europe," ibid., March 30, 1935, p. 387; "What Germany Is Really Asking," ibid., November 23, 1935, pp. 1475-1476; "Is Peace Nearer in Europe?," ibid., March 3, 1938, pp. 259-262; and "Blessed Are the Peace Makers," ibid., October 20, 1938, p. 1315.

As the possibility for war became more real, Ryden's campaign for peace rose with a long, loud crescendo. It blended a pacifistic impulse with an isolationist sympathy. In 1937, Ryden called on President Roosevelt to summon a world conference to deal with the problems vexing the world in order that armed conflict might be avoided. A year later he was attacking Roosevelt for not adhering to the Neutrality Act. Ryden contended that it was perfectly evident, despite assurances to the contrary, that the act would not be upheld. He saw the President already aligned with France and England and deplored the degree of power Congress was conferring on the Chief Executive. He launched a campaign to overcome the possibility of war, through education. Public school text books were no longer to glorify war. Youth were to be educated both in school and in the church to want peace. With great persistency, Ryden continued his theme and called for the formation of peace organizations and for work toward that goal through political channels. To increase the possibility for peace, he called for universal disarmament, the elimination of trade barriers, revision of the Versailles Treaty, and removal of private profits in munitions. He also supported the Ludlow amendment to refer declarations of war to a public referendum, except in the event of an invasion.¹

When Roosevelt asked to have the Neutrality Act amended, Ryden expressed his objections. He protested the calling of a special session of Congress to repeal the arms embargo provision of the Neutrality Act

¹See [Ryden], "America Drifting Into Another War?" Lutheran Companion, October 14, 1937, p. 1315; "A Foreign Policy Full of Danger," ibid., September 15, 1938, p. 1155; and "In Behalf of Peace," ibid., October 6, 1938, pp. 1256-1258.

on the ground that it was the first step toward our involvement in war. He heatedly attacked the President for signing an agreement with England to exchange fifty destroyers for ninety-nine-year leases of British possessions in the Western hemisphere. He reported with pleasure that all the students at Augustana Seminary and all but three students at Augustana College, Rock Island, who had been asked to sign, had affixed their names to a petition to President Roosevelt asking him to adhere to his promises to keep the United States out of war. In addition, several Augustana congregations had written Congress protesting the breach in the Neutrality Act, he announced. He addressed an open front-page letter to the President supporting the FCC request for an international conference to deal with world problems. When Roosevelt proposed military training for Americans, Ryden contended that such a move had "all the earmarks of the Hitler Youth Movement in Germany."¹

Ryden's position, however, was not that of a consistent pacifist, despite very strong pacifistic sympathies. He considered war of any kind to be inherently evil, and as such it was to be completely rejected by Christians as an accepted manner of settling disputes. He was passionately convinced of the correctness of his position and wrote scores and scores of editorials explaining and reiterating his views. In fact, after the war broke out in Europe, hardly an issue of the Companion was printed that did not contain at least one article dealing

¹See [Ryden], "Let's Be Honest About Embargo," Lutheran Companion, October 10, 1939, p. 1316; "Following Formula of World War," ibid., September 21, 1939, p. 1187; "Another Step Toward War and Dictatorship?", ibid., September 19, 1940, pp. 1187-1188; "Students Enlist in Peace Efforts," ibid., June 5, 1941, p. 707; "Churches Protest Neutrality Change," ibid., September 28, 1939, p. 1219; "An Open Letter," ibid., April 20, 1939, cover page; and "American Version of Hitler Youth," ibid., July 4, 1940, p. 835.

with the war question. When the low countries were invaded, Ryden maintained the stance of neutrality. When Finland was attacked by Russia, however, he supported the former's efforts at self defense. He acknowledged criticism for this inconsistency, but nevertheless contended that Finland had always been a peace-loving country and that she did not want the war. Despite this inconsistency, however, he insisted war ought to be renounced as a device to settle disputes.¹

In May of 1941, the Companion printed the text of a letter addressed to President Roosevelt and to Congress opposing United States participation in the war. Readers were urged to reproduce the letter and send it to Washington. When Roosevelt requested Congress for authority to produce or procure any defense article for any country whose defense the President thought vital to the security of the United States, Ryden accused Roosevelt of wanting war and of purposely moving the country in that direction. He attacked the President for asking people to fight for democracy while taking it away, to defend liberty while robbing them of it. When Roosevelt warned German and Italian submarines to stay out of waters deemed essential to the defense of the United States, Ryden argued that freedom of the seas meant freedom to trade peacefully, not freedom to engage in war trade. Just two weeks prior to Pearl Harbor, the Companion posed the question to the church whether it would have the courage to maintain its witness against war and for peace or if it too, would eventually be silenced.²

¹See [Ryden], "Low Countries Are Invaded by Germans," Lutheran Companion, May 23, 1940, p. 643; "Heroic Finland Is Forced To Yield," ibid., March 28, 1940, p. 387; and "Can War Ever Be Justified?", ibid., May 9, 1940, p. 579.

²See [Ryden], "Proposed Letters on War Issue," ibid., May 22, 1941, p. 664; "A Day of Destiny," ibid., January 23, 1941, p. 99; "America

After the formal entry of the United States into the war, Ryden painfully called for loyal support. One can sense the personal agony involved as he recalled his opposition to war during the past seven years. War was still evil and a sin, he maintained. Nevertheless, he felt a patriotic citizen could not shirk his duty:

The life of the Republic, with all the deeply cherished liberties for which it stands, is at stake. No matter what our differences of opinion may have been in the past so far as the foreign policy of our government is concerned, we now stand shoulder to shoulder as Americans to meet our common peril. And whatever sacrifices may be demanded of us, we will make them gladly because of the love we have for our land.¹

Ryden's fierce battle against war was not waged alone in Augustana. It had a fairly widespread support. Among the pacifists was an influential professor at Gustavus Adolphus College named Edgar Carlson. He argued that the prohibition to kill allowed no exceptions. Moreover, he pointed out that Jesus had refused to defend himself or to be defended and had refused to support Jewish nationalism with force. Carlson said Jesus "preferred to die and to risk the lives of His friends rather than kill" and maintained that the early church had held a similar view. The stones at the stoning of Stephen came from only one direction, he argued. War was a denial of every Christian ideal, he maintained, and said a nation's honor could not be defended by wholesale murder. If war comes, he added, "the Way of the Cross may lead through sacrifice, and death, but never through murder and bloodshed."²

Brought Closer to War," Lutheran Companion, September 28, 1941, p. 1091; and "Congress Scraps Neutrality Act," ibid., November 27, 1941, p. 1379.

¹[Ryden], "America at War," ibid., December 18, 1941, p. 1476.

²Edgar M. Carlson, "If War Comes," ibid., November 4, 1938, pp. 1388-1389.

This is not to suggest that Augustana held predominantly pacifist views during this period. Isolationism was running strong in the country at the same time. It would appear therefore, that the support for the anti-war feelings in Augustana was drawn from some persons with pacifistic sympathies--likely a small minority--together with a fairly large group of practical isolationists, as well as from an important group of people who felt war was sin and abhorred it, but who were willing to engage in it if the nation became involved.¹ Paul Carter has shown that this combination was not uncommon in the churches during the 30's.

Interest in peace had been expressed early in the conventions and conferences of the Augustana Church. In 1934, the annual convention adopted a strongly worded resolution denouncing war and munitions makers. The statement referred to the latter as "uncurbed enemies of life, peace and the pursuit of happiness, dispensers of death and destroyers of souls, . . ." The resolution charged that much of the present moral, religious, economic, and political decadence was traceable to World War I and its aftermath. The synod therefore declared itself "unalterably opposed to war as a means for the settlement of the controversies among nations," and dedicated "its good offices in behalf of all honorable crusades for peace among men; . . ." The delegates voted to endorse the "prohibition of private manufacture of war munitions," because they said that the profit motive was "unquestionably . . .

¹For example, see Bersell's comments to the 1941 convention, *infra*, p. 138. See also Eric H. Wahlstrom, "Law, Gospel, and Peace," *Lutheran Companion*, October 10, 1940, p. 1298; and "Editorial Comments," *Augustana Quarterly*, XIX (April, 1940), p. 190.

²Carter, *Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel*, pp. 204ff.

largely responsible for the fanning of the flames of modern war; . . ."

Members were called upon to do all in their power to promote peace. The synodical authorities were instructed to send a copy of the resolution to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.¹

In 1935, the national convention again went on record deploring the threat of war and confessing "that if private profit be removed from the preparation for and prosecution of wars, the danger to the peace of the world would to a great extent be removed; . . .". The resolution called on the national government to prohibit completely "the private manufacture and sale of munitions of war, or to put such manufacture and sale under the most rigid government supervision and control." Two years later, the convention voted its support of the proposed Ludlow amendment requiring declarations of war to be referred to a public referendum except in the event of invasion.²

When Augustana convened its annual meeting in 1939, they met midway between the moment when Hitler sent his armies into Czechoslovakia and when he invaded Poland. In the face of rising nationalism the world over, the synod voted to "emphasize the transcendence of the kingdom of God as over against all concepts of the supremacy of nationalism or the so-called totalitarian state." They urged calm to meet the temptation to war hysteria and declared their opposition to all wars, except in the case of actual invasion. The synod then stated its agreement with the Oxford conference statement that

war involves compulsory enmity, diabolical outrage against human personality, and wanton distortion of the truth. War is a particular demonstration of the power of sin in this world, and a

¹Augustana, Minutes (1934), p. 186.

²Ibid. (1935), pp. 178-179; and (1937), pp. 241-242.

defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. No justification of war must be allowed to conceal or minimize this fact.

The convention further went on record as opposed to "the sale of munitions, materials and implements of war to all aggressor nations, engaged in declared or undeclared war," and instructed the members of Augustana "to use all possible means to acquaint their Senators and Representatives in Congress concerning our position."¹ Augustana thus obviously had chosen to chart a new course by trying to influence both the conscience of public leaders and the course along which the latter might take the nation.

Some of the conferences also took action. In 1935 the Kansas Conference voted to express its opposition to "wars of aggression," and approved efforts to limit profits from the armament industry. Minnesota concurred, saying war was inconsistent with the principles of Christianity, except in the case of self defense. She urged the United States not to insist on strict enforcement of freedom of the seas lest such action erupt in war. Two years later the New England Conference voted to support the Ludlow proposal. On the eve of the war, the conference voted for neutrality.² In 1941, several conferences again went on record calling for continued neutrality. California voted to endorse referral of war declarations to a public referendum. The Illinois Conference expressed its opposition to war and reminded national leaders of their promises to keep American servicemen from fighting on foreign soil. Nebraska expressed similar hopes. New England

¹Augustana, Minutes (1939), p. 266.

²Kansas Conference, ibid. (1935), p. 68; Minnesota Conference, ibid. (1935), pp. 97-98; New England Conference, ibid. (1937), pp. 106-107; and (1940), pp. 109-110.

referred to war as a divine judgment and urged the United States to stay neutral. In 1939 and 1941, the New York Conference expressed its opposition to war propaganda, excessive armaments, and the use of United States ships as British convoys. In both instances, the delegates encouraged the membership to write Congressmen to protest such programs. Also joining the plea for neutrality was the Red River Valley Conference.¹

With the formal involvement of the United States in World War II, attention shifted from opposing war to championing peace. The Companion illustrated this trend. When the war was discussed, it was usually referred to in terms of humility and penitence. Stories about the resistance of the Scandinavian churches, as well as similar events inside Germany were printed for the Augustana reader. Space was given to ecumenical activities on behalf of peace. Editorials called for humane considerations and justice tempered with mercy in efforts to draft a new peace treaty.²

Significant support was given by the Augustana Synod to the conscientious objector. At the 1940 convention, the Commission on Morals and Social Problems, with the endorsement of President P. O. Bersell, submitted a resolution which said, in part:

¹California Conference, Minutes (1941), p. 31; Illinois Conference, ibid. (1941), pp. 126-127; Nebraska Conference, ibid. (1941), pp. 55-60; New York Conference, ibid. (1939), p. 62; (1941), pp. 84-85; and Red River Valley Conference, ibid. (1941), p. 65.

²See for example, such editorials by Ryden: "Peace Aims Listed by World Council," Lutheran Companion, March 3, 1943, p. 259; "Harsh Peace Terms Delaying Armistice?", ibid., August 18, 1943, p. 931; "Leaders of Religion Map Peace Program," ibid., October 20, 1943, p. 1155; "Church at Prayer in a Day of Crisis," ibid., January 1, 1942, p. 3; "Protestants Ask for Just Peace," ibid., March 19, 1942, p. 355; "Norwegian Bishops Are Imprisoned," ibid., April 23, 1942, p. 516; and "Norwegian Church Breaks with Nazis," ibid., August 20, 1942, p. 947.

The Lutheran Augustana Synod recognizes the authority of properly constituted government. However, we respect the attitude of the conscientious objector relative to war. We believe that government should not violate the Christian conscience by seeking to compel conscientious objectors to engage in military service. We ask exemption from all forms of combatant military service for all conscientious objectors who may be members of the Augustana Synod.¹

The resolution was adopted after the important phrase, "except in event of actual invasion," was added. The convention also reaffirmed its 1939 statement on war, which had urged Christians to work on behalf of peace. The statement labeled war a demonstration of the power of sin and a defiance of the righteousness of God in Christ. It also reiterated Augustana's opposition to the sale of munitions and implements to aggressor nations.²

In 1941, the Commission on Morals and Social Problems recommended to the convention that the phrase, "except in event of actual invasion" be dropped from the statement on conscientious objectors. The convention voted to uphold the commission and to reverse its previous stand. The delegates also adopted a resolution instructing the synod to establish a registry for all conscientious objectors. The latter resolution was requested by twenty-two students at Augustana Seminary who had formed the Augustana Lutheran Fellowship of Reconciliation and who wished to give financial and moral aid to the objectors.³

President P. O. Bersell, in speaking to the 1941 convention, declared himself both opposed to war and willing to support it, should

¹Augustana, Minutes (1940), p. 194.

²Ibid., p. 198; and ibid. (1939), p. 266.

³Ibid. (1941), pp. 233-234 and 266.

it eventuate. He called on the church to continue its efforts against all war activity and on behalf of peace. He even supported the proposed Ludlow amendment. Nevertheless he said, "I wish to state most emphatically that if, in the providence of God, our country is drawn into the armed conflict, we will continue to give our government our loyal support in the spirit of Christian patriotism."¹

When the Augustana Synod convened for the first time following Pearl Harbor, President Bersell devoted two-thirds of his printed convention address to the subject of war. He reiterated Augustana's opposition to war, except in the case of invasion of the United States. He left to the individual conscience the question whether or not the Christian should bear arms, as each weighed his own reactions to Romans 13:1-2 and Acts 5:29. He repeated Augustana's support of the conscientious objector.²

Several resolutions concerning war were adopted by the convention. One reaffirmed the 1939 statement regarding subordination of the state to the kingdom of God. At the same time the resolution said that

. . . we deem it nothing less than our sacred duty as citizens to give our Government our loyal support in the spirit of Christian patriotism, ever maintaining "that no loyalty to an earthly cause shall be permitted to alienate our love from or disturb our obedience to the Kingdom of God."

The convention further declared that they regarded war "as a judgment of God upon nations because of sin; . . ." and confessed that "we have contributed to the guilt of our nation . . ."³

¹Augustana, Minutes (1941), p. 23.

²Ibid. (1942), pp. 14-15.

³Ibid., p. 25.

A statement adopted upon recommendation of the Commission on Morals and Social Problems refused to blame the war to the providence of God, but said instead it resulted from a disobedience to God. The statement then said in part:

The Synod urges its members to remain loyal to Christ; to be on guard lest the sanction of the Church be given to anything which is contrary to the spirit of Christ; to seek to maintain civil and religious liberties during this period when passions can so easily be aroused; to withstand all propaganda of hatred and revenge; to manifest a spirit of goodwill toward those among us who spring from nations with which our country is now at war; to manifest generosity to those who suffer because of the war, including prisoners of war; to support the work of ministering to the spiritual needs of the men in the armed forces of our country; to work for justice and good will among groups and nations; to seek and support national policies in harmony with the will of God and to work for a just and lasting peace.¹

Similar viewpoints were incorporated in the resolutions adopted by the 1943 convention, at which Augustana declared that plans for post-war reconstruction should be made without recourse to revenge and that food and clothing should be sent to occupied nations to prevent starvation, as well as physical and moral degeneration.²

In 1944, the Augustana Synod adopted as its official position a statement on world peace issued in October, 1943 by Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders in the United States. She was the only Lutheran church to adopt the entire statement. It identified a number of basic points to govern the pursuit of peace. Included among the guidelines were the ideas that the moral law must govern world order; the rights of individuals must be assured; the rights of oppressed, weak, and colonial peoples must be protected; the rights of minorities secured; international institutions were to maintain the peace with

¹Augustana, Minutes (1942), p. 232.

²Ibid. (1943), p. 283.

justice; international economic cooperation was to be developed; and a just social order within each state was to be achieved. To these affirmations, Augustana added a preface and a conclusion. In the latter it said: "Beyond this common statement of principles, the Augustana Synod holds that the ultimate foundation of peace requires man's spiritual regeneration according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ."¹

The question of war thus dominated the social concern of Augustana for at least a decade. She reflected more interest and a greater sensitivity to this issue than any other Lutheran group, including the United Lutheran Church, which also gave effective attention to this question. In giving the question of war such high priority, Augustana gave very little consideration during this period to other social issues.² Nevertheless, the action of Augustana concerning the issues of war and peace reflect a broadening sense of social responsibility in that church.

Support For Segregation

Race relations received little attention in Augustana prior to World War II and the attitudes expressed only supported the status quo. When the Spanish civil war broke out, for example, the Companion editor attributed the outbreak to class hatred. Nonetheless, he paid almost no attention to smouldering racial hatred in the United States. Commenting on what was termed seventy-five years of progress since the civil war, the Companion observed editorially that many Negroes had remained

¹Augustana, Minutes (1944), p. 286.

²Much concern was expressed about the sanctity of the home as well as about gambling. These, however, were fairly familiar positions for Lutherans of a pietistic tradition to espouse.

virtual serfs and that throughout America almost no occupations were open to them except menial tasks. The editor contended without elaboration that racial assimilation was likely not desirable. He observed that Negroes were here to stay and that the church should lead in the solution of the race problem, but he offered no suggestions except that the church ought to establish Negro mission work.¹

The editor's defense of segregation was rather strongly expressed in an editorial in 1942. He reported that the Philadelphia Federation of Churches had asked mixed communities to open their doors to members of all races. The editor maintained that he had the deepest sympathy for Negroes and that to prevent their entrance into a white church to worship would be an unchristian act. He nevertheless proceeded to endorse segregation:

However, we seriously question the wisdom of indiscriminate mingling of whites and blacks in churches. This would eventually result in membership of both in such congregations. Those whose sense of justice impel them to advocate this liberal attitude toward the negro should not lose sight of all of the implications involved in such a relationship. In many instances it would probably result in inter-marriage between the races. The problem arising in many families from such situations and the tragic heart-breaks resulting from them can easily be envisioned. Least happy of all would be the lot of those negroes who found themselves separated from the members of their own race and not fully accepted into the social life and family circles of the whites.

We acknowledge that the problem is one of the most difficult that confronts the Church today, but we are convinced that both races will find their greatest happiness not in indiscriminate intermingling, but rather in the fellowship of their own people. This, we believe, is the only answer that can be found to the problem.²

¹[Ryden], "A Nation Torn by Class Hatred," Lutheran Companion, September 5, 1936, p. 1123; and "Negroes Celebrate 75-Year Progress," ibid., July 25, 1940, p. 931.

²[Ryden], "Race Problem Not So Easily Solved," ibid., November 12, 1942, p. 1299.

The Companion did not alter its view during this period. When race rioting broke out in Detroit and Los Angeles, the editor ascribed it to young hoodlums and the influence of taverns.¹

The Japanese fared a bit better. A letter to the editor made a strong plea for the 112,000 Japanese Americans who had been interned at the outbreak of World War II. The point was made that 70,000 of these were American citizens. The words "protective custody" were "made in Germany," the writer said. "Race discrimination is Hitler's crime, but ours too," the writer cried. "Hitler never drew the blood line closer than we who have sent small children with only one-eighth Japanese ancestry into these camps," he continued. In commenting on the letter, the editor agreed that those people had been deprived of their rights without due process of law. He pointed out that no cases had been discovered of actual sabotage by Japanese Americans, and that no effort was being made to treat Italian and German descendants similarly to the Japanese. He argued that all Americans should be allowed the freedoms of this country until they proved themselves unworthy of them.²

Some concern was also expressed in the press for the treatment of Jews. In the early days of the Hitler regime, Samuel McCrea Cavert published an article in the Companion telling of the plight of the Jews in Germany.³ Reports of Jewish persecution in Norway under Quisling were also related, together with statements from leading Norwegians

¹[Ryden], "Nation Is Shocked by Race Rioting," Lutheran Companion, July 7, 1943, p. 835.

²Ross Marquis, ibid., August 6, 1942, p. 916; and [Ryden], "Are We Being Fair to American Japs?", ibid., p. 915.

³"Behind the Scenes in Germany," ibid., June 17, 1933, pp. 750-751.

opposed to such actions. A letter from sixty Norwegian churchmen was quoted as having said to the Quisling regime: "we . . . warn the temporal authority, saying in the name of Jesus Christ: Halt the persecution of Jews. Stop the racial hatred which is being spread in our country through the newspapers."¹

The Augustana Quarterly, while printing the story about the persecutions in Norway, added its own editorial comments which aligned it with the segregationist position of the Companion. The writer contended that the church could not recognize either racial "superiority" or "inferiority," but went on to endorse segregation nevertheless:

Here is where the Church is placed in a difficult position. While recognizing spiritual unity, she can not accept racial and social unity. Theoretically it might be argued that Negro, Japanese, and Chinese Christians should be welcomed in and absorbed by the white churches. Practically it would intensify rather than solve the race problems.²

More positive statements on the racial question were made by two of the Augustana conferences. In 1944, the California Conference received a report calling attention to discrimination against Negroes, Mexicans, Orientals, and Jews in hotels, restaurants, unions, and government. The report recommended the cultivation of friendly attitudes toward all races. The convention voted to "urge the pastors and laity of our Conference to exert every effort to stem the tide of racial discrimination and that we urge the Augustana Synod to take whatever steps are possible to aid in the relocation of Americans by Japanese descent."³ That same year the Illinois Conference also adopted a reso-

¹Quoted in "Editorial Comments," Augustana Quarterly, XXII (April, 1943), p. 184.

²"Editorial Comments," ibid., p. 192.

³California Conference, Minutes (1944), pp. 39-40.

lution on race, calling attention to what was termed "haughty contempt, hatred, prejudice, and injurious discrimination" against Negroes, Jews, Japanese, and other minority groups of racial, national, or social background. Such discrimination was said to be "in conflict with the principle of Christianity." The resolution called attention to the fact that "according to the findings of reputable anthropologists and psychologists, there are no inherent, racial differences in mentality . . ."

Further, the resolution said that

the Illinois Conference seeks for these minority groups equality of educational opportunity, economic justice, political equality, freedom of speech, fair and wholesome social opportunities, and adequate health and housing facilities.¹

These two resolutions, the first to be adopted by Augustana, foreshadowed the stand the church was to take on a national basis in the period following World War II. For the moment, however, the new voices were rarely heard.

A Review of the Factors Contributing Toward Change

It can be seen from the incidents described and the opinions expressed in print that the Augustana Synod was beginning to move out of a quietistic position. She was no longer the silent, subservient supporter of the status quo on all issues. To be sure, she had concentrated her attention during these years on the questions of war and alcohol, to the virtual exclusion of all other social issues. Moreover, her position concerning alcohol was a conservative and negative one.

However, the question of war was likely the major social issue of the late 1930's and early 40's. Hence to concentrate on this item was

¹Illinois Conference, Minutes (1944), p. 105.

not to express peripheral concern. On the contrary, the action represented an attempt to guide and influence the nation concerning the most significant issue to grip the attention and conscience of the United States. A new day was therefore at hand in Augustana.

Dr. G. Everett Arden, Augustana historian, agrees that a new trend was underway in Augustana at this time. He has written:

About 1935, . . . there began to emerge within the Augustana Church a new and livelier social awareness and concern. This new social consciousness may be briefly described as a clearer recognition by the Synod that the Christian Church is a part of the society in which it exists, and that a part of its calling under God is to bear a corporate witness to the problems of society even while it uses its corporate influence to see that, in so far as possible, the will of God is done in all areas and relationships of human life.¹

How does one account for this change which was beginning to emerge? The answer to this question has already been stated in part. The depression and the war seem to have aroused the conscience of Augustana. There were, however, other significant contributing factors.

One of these additional factors was the Americanization of the Augustana Church. Historian George Stephenson has remarked that "of the many immigrant stocks that have contributed to the population of the United States, the Swedes have shown the least resistance to Americanization."² In a study of this process, Dr. Gene Lund has written that the Americanization of Augustana can be dated to the 1920's. World War I, during which time some states outlawed the use of a foreign language, together with a sharp decline in Swedish immigration,³ accelerated the process considerably, he maintains. As

¹Augustana Heritage, pp. 360-361.

²"The Future of the Augustana Synod," XII (June, 1933), p. 125.

³For example, in 1903, some 43,487 Swedes immigrated to the

early as 1895 Augustana had decided to use English on an equal basis with Swedish at future synodical meetings. By 1931, the use of English was so widespread that the Association of English Churches within the Augustana Synod disbanded. Lund maintains that as soon as the clergy and congregations began to use English, the Americanization of Augustana was completed almost overnight.¹ This change meant that Augustana was now no longer isolated but was exposed to the thought of other church groups, among which one of the dominant influences at this time was, of course, the social gospel in modified form. In addition to Americanization was the gradual urbanization of the Augustana church.

Two other factors of great importance to Augustana must be noted. These were the theological impact made on the synod by the ecumenical movement and the contemporary theological renaissance. In this sense Augustana differed from the other members of the American Lutheran Conference² and resembled more closely the developments in the ULCA. The full impact of this development did not become evident until in the second period under consideration, but the initial influences are discernible in the late 30's and early 40's as well.

Augustana sent five delegates to both the Faith and Order and Life and Work conferences in 1937. The delegates reported very favorably concerning both events, saying that "few Americans . . . came back

United States, whereas in 1915, the number totaled less than 2,500. Pressure for the use of the Swedish language therefore decreased considerably. See Arden, Augustana Heritage, pp. 235-238.

¹"The Americanization of the Augustana Lutheran Church," pp. 171-175 and 159.

²The other conference members were the ALC, NLCA, Lutheran Free Church and The United Danish Lutheran Church.

from the two world conferences of the Churches held last summer in Great Britain quite the same as they were before their attendance and experiences there."¹ One of the delegates subdivided his report with this heading: "The Ecumenical Movement Has Given the Church a New Sense of Her Responsibility for the Character of Civilization."² The Companion carried a number of articles dealing with the messages of the two conferences.³ Dr. G. Everett Arden maintains that this confrontation of Augustana with a new dimension of community responsibility through the ecumenical movement was one of the forces which helped fashion a new social concern in the synod.⁴

The change which occurred in American protestant theology during the 1930's was welcomed by Augustana and was a further important factor producing the new stance. Dr. Edgar Carlson, professor of Christianity at Gustavus Adolphus College expressed it this way:

Perhaps no more descriptive statement concerning modern theology and its trends could be made than to say that one schooled in Lutheran thinking has come to feel himself a part of the stream again. Current Christian thinking seems relevant to him. Revelation, sin and grace, atonement, and the regeneration of man are among the subjects in almost any table of contents.⁵

¹Conrad Bergendoff, "Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937," Augustana Quarterly, XVII (January, 1938), p. 25.

²Clifford Ansgar Nelson, "The Ecumenical Pilgrimage," ibid., XVIII (January, 1939), p. 43.

³See for example, "Forward Together," Lutheran Companion, January 6, 1938, pp. 15 and 31; "The Church--Its Nature," ibid., January 13, 1938, pp. 40-41; "Message to the Churches," ibid., January 20, 1938; "Church and Community," ibid., January 27, 1938, pp. 108-110; and "Church and State," ibid., February 7, 1938, pp. 204-206.

⁴Augustana Heritage, p. 361.

⁵"The Prophetic Interpretation of History," Augustana Quarterly, XVIII (October, 1939), p. 322.

What was termed "the romantic doctrine of progress" had been "exposed or disproved," Carlson said, "not so much by arguments as by events. Change is not equivalent to improvement."¹ With the trend in American protestant theology toward a more "conservative" position, Augustana Lutherans did not feel so defensive over against it and were more open to its influence.

This new influence gained a significant foothold in Augustana in 1931 with the addition of four new faculty at Augustana Seminary. As a result of a dispute, some resignations had occurred which necessitated these new appointments. Each of the new men had received his post-graduate training outside the Lutheran Church and reflected these influences. Dr. Conrad Bergendoff had received his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago where Shailer Mathews was dean. The Rev. A. D. Mattson had studied at Yale, Professor Eric Wahlstrom at Yale and Chicago, and Professor Carl Anderson at Wisconsin and Chicago. This change in the faculty opened Augustana to contemporary currents in Christian thought much earlier than was the case in the NLCA and the ALC and placed her under the influence of the serious attempt in protestant theology to relate theology and life in a realistic fashion.

European theologians were also beginning to exert a new influence in Augustana at this time, especially that of the Swedish theologians at Lund. The real impact of this movement did not become clearly discernible until after World War II, although traces of its initial impact can be seen by the early 1940's. By that time, two Augustana leaders

¹"The Prophetic Interpretation of History," Augustana Quarterly, XVIII (October, 1939), p. 323.

had begun to translate some of the central ideas of the Swedish school back to the Augustana Synod.¹

A final factor in the rise of a new social consciousness within the Augustana Synod was the influence of key teachers, not only at the seminary, but also at the colleges owned and operated by the synod. Some of these teachers were laymen. Reference has already been made to such teachers as A. D. Mattson, Conrad Bergendoff, S. J. Sebelius, C. J. Södergren, and Edgar Carlson. To this list should be added three more names for this period, namely Dr. Joshua Lindstrom, professor of sociology at Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey; Dr. A. F. Schersten, professor of sociology and political science at Augustana College, Rock Island; and the Rev. C. G. Carlfelt, professor of systematic theology at Augustana Seminary.²

The change which was underway in Augustana was important. It had a broader support within this church than did related interests in either the NLCA or the ALC. The new developments had moved Augustana a greater distance from her former position than was the case with either of the other sister churches. Significantly, as the new social conscious-

¹See for example, Edgar M. Carlson, "The Interpretation of Luther in Modern Swedish Theology," Augustana Quarterly, XXIII (July, 1944), pp. 195-220; and Conrad Bergendoff, "Lutheran Ethics and Scandinavian Lutheranism," ibid. XX (July, 1941), pp. 207-221; and "The Lutheran Church and the Modern State," ibid., XXI (October, 1942), pp. 315-325. For a fuller discussion of this subject, see infra, pp. 297ff.

²See for example, Joshua Lindstrom, "The Function of the Church and Social Reconstruction," ibid. XVI (April, 1937), pp. 164-167; A. F. Schersten, "The Church and the Local Community," ibid., XX (July, 1941), pp. 222-237; and C. G. Carlfelt, "The Functions of the Church," ibid., XIX (July, 1940), pp. 195-209. Professor Schersten was a member for a number of years on the Synodical Commission on Moral and Social Problems, as well as on the Committee on Social Trends for the National Lutheran Council and the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference.

ness was beginning to emerge, Augustana sought to give the movement theological support and direction. This effort developed in the next period to be studied.

CHAPTER V
THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Introduction

Of all the Lutheran churches in America, the United Lutheran Church expressed the most highly developed social consciousness during the period from 1930 through 1944. This is not to suggest that the ULCA burst in upon the American scene untouched by the world about her nor unmoved by her own theological heritage. No church does.

The America of the early 30's was fighting about drinking alcohol. The question had divided one of the leading political parties in a bitter dispute as recently as 1924. The issue had been a factor in the presidential campaign of 1928. The ULCA participated in this battle, entering when she did on the conservative side of the fray.

The America of the early 30's was suffering from the shock of a great depression and fighting to overcome it. Disagreement about what to do concerning the predicament prevailed in both political and economic circles. The ULCA during this period reflected shock from the economic crash and groped uncertainly for more sure ground from which to meet economic crises.

The America of the middle 30's and early 40's first ran from, then darted into a war of nearly world wide proportions. The movement to and fro concerning this issue nationally and in other churches was also reflected in the ULCA.

The America of this period lived nearly unaware of its moral dilemma in the area of race relations. The eyes of the ULCA were as clouded with cataracts as the eyes of the nation generally as she looked almost unseeingly at this problem.

To say that the ULCA responded to some problems emerging to view on the national horizon is not to suggest that the ULCA stood outside her conservative theological heritage. This church rarely adopted romantic notions about establishing the kingdom of God on earth.¹ The ULCA continued to assert the need for personal conversion, to proclaim personal redemption through Christ, to emphasize the renewing character of word and sacraments, and to give priority to evangelism rather than to social action.

Nevertheless, a change was occurring. The ULCA had become Americanized prior to 1930. Thus she was moving in the cross currents of American life, both socially and theologically, in a more open manner than that which characterized other Lutheran groups. She was the most urbanized of the four churches being studied. The ULCA was thus confronted, in a more intense fashion than the other groups, with the complex problems of the twentieth century and she attempted to meet them with understanding.

In making this attempt, the ULCA did not move very far until after World War II. The old quietism surfaced, showing it was still a force within the church. New positions were taken, haltingly and sometimes vaguely. By the end of the era, however, some people in the ULCA

¹See infra, p. 158.

had begun to recognize this vagueness and to call for a new statement of social ethics.

This era was, therefore, an era in early transition. There were cries for stability and for change. The general direction was clear-- greater involvement in shaping America's response to social issues--but the specific route for moving in that direction was not yet charted.

Prohibition: Support For a Dying Cause

Prohibition was a dying cause as this period of study begins, but some sections of the ULCA were not quite ready to call it a corpse. The body of belief associated with this experiment in American life was treated in some synods with tenderness and affection and given some strong verbal support. In this development, the ULCA followed a pattern similar to that in Augustana, although support for the movement in the latter church was more widespread and prevailed for a longer period. In the ULCA, prohibition support echoed through several synodical conventions and then suddenly died.

This scattered interest in prohibition was especially noticeable in Pennsylvania. The East Pennsylvania Synod in 1930 adopted Anti-Saloon League reports which urged citizens to "hold high today the torch of Prohibition . . . until America is dry in fact as well as in spirit." Prohibition "must be enforced," the convention said, adding that churches "must line up their forces in loyalty to, and in defense of, this 'noble experiment' in righteousness and good government." Three years later the delegates voted to deplore the movement to repeal the eighteenth amendment. Support for the Anti-Saloon League

and for temperance movements in East Pennsylvania continued throughout the 1930's.¹

The Pennsylvania-based Susquehanna Synod also expressed considerable interest in the prohibition cause. The synod's temperance committee reported in 1930 that "leading economists" reputedly had estimated a six billion dollar saving to the United States in terms of money, greater efficiency, less sickness, fewer work hours lost, and increased production, as a result of prohibition. Two years later the committee agreed that the eighteenth amendment had fallen "far short of what was hoped for," but they nevertheless called for greater support of the program. After its repeal, the group pledged themselves to support efforts limiting alcohol consumption.²

Two other Pennsylvania synods also expressed support for prohibition. The annual conventions of the Synod of West Pennsylvania received reports which spoke glowingly of the achievements of the experiment, concerning both personal and environmental improvement. In 1932, the temperance committee report resolved that "liquor and lawlessness . . . shall forever perish from the earth." Even after the repeal, the temperance committee said that "ever keeping in mind the fact 'that righteousness exalteth a nation and that sin is a reproach to any people,' we must, with courage and fortitude fight the good fight, knowing that in due season we shall reap if we faint not."³ The

¹Evangelical Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania, Minutes (1930), pp. 107-108; (1933), p. 142; (1935), pp. 131-132 and 150; (1936), p. 146; and (1938), p. 143.

²Susquehanna Synod of Central Pennsylvania, ibid. (1930), p. 82; (1932), p. 93; and (1935), p. 90.

³Synod of West Pennsylvania, ibid. (1930), p. 100; (1931), p. 85; (1932), p. 83; (1934), p. 4; (1935), p. 95; and (1937), p. 114.

Pittsburgh Synod voted in 1930 urging its pastors to cooperate with temperance agencies as far as they deemed wise in order to educate people to dangers from strong drink and the need for law enforcement.¹

Temperance was also endorsed by the Georgia-Alabama Synod in 1935. Four years earlier the Illinois Synod voted to commend its governor for vetoing a bill to repeal the state prohibition law. Support for the Anti-Saloon League and prohibition was also expressed in Kansas. West Virginia added its voice in the support of what it called the "high and holy heritage" of prohibition and voted to affirm its preference for "sobriety and temperance." After the battle concerning prohibition was recognized as lost, interested persons tried other methods to keep alcoholic consumption under control. For example, the Maryland Synod voted in 1942 to petition the legislature of that state to close on Sundays all places selling alcoholic beverages.²

Concern for this question soon diminished. The position taken relating to it is significant, however, despite the conservatism involved. The importance of this action is reflected in the public acceptance of responsibility to influence not only private individuals with respect to a given issue, but also to shape public policy with regard to it.

¹Pittsburgh Synod, Minutes (1930), pp. 192-193; and (1931), p. 205.

²Georgia-Alabama Synod, ibid. (1935), p. 12; Illinois Synod, ibid. (1931), pp. 24 and 91; Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Kansas and Adjacent States, ibid. (1931), p. 45; (1933), p. 38; (1934), p. 39; Synod of West Virginia, ibid. (1932), p. 62; (1933), p. 51; and Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland, ibid. (1942), p. 66.

The Depression: Debate and Action Concerning

Social Involvement

As was the case in the other Lutheran churches being studied, the depression left the strongest impact on the ULCA during the first part of this period insofar as influences concerning social responsibility were concerned. Response to the economic difficulties varied from what Troeltsch has described as uncritical acceptance of the status quo to a call for a change in the existing social order.

Troeltsch's characterization was illustrated, for example, by action taken at the East Pennsylvania Synod conventions. In 1932 the delegates voted to say "that in view of the widespread economic distress in a time that tries men's souls, we encourage the members of our congregations, meanwhile, to be patient and to sacrifice to the extent of their ability for the relieving of suffering in our midst."¹ This action represented the traditional Lutheran quietistic appeal to patient tolerance of the status quo while at the same time attempting to extend charity to the unfortunate. No concrete proposals were made for efforts to correct the situation which gave birth to the conditions requiring charity. A year earlier the same synod, in referring to the depression, had voted to express what they termed "the importance of a sincere faith and trust in our heavenly Father's goodness, a deep sense of gratitude for all His blessings, and an abiding confidence in the power of truth and the exercise of love" to correct the world situation.² In 1933 the delegates voted to say

¹East Pennsylvania Synod, Minutes (1932), p. 137.

²Ibid. (1931), p. 128.

that in view of the glaring evils abroad in the land, the great physical suffering and financial distress of so many of our people, we as ministers and laymen, re-dedicate ourselves to the prime duty of the Church of Christ, namely to preach and to practice the Glorious Gospel of our blessed Lord which is not only able to save people from their sins but is completely capable of establishing the Kingdom of God upon earth.¹

Such statements, noble in intent, lacked the breadth necessary to account for the possible despair, frustration, or even bitterness of people who were suffering despite their best efforts to be self-supporting. Clergymen from that synod drew salaries in 1929 to 1930 of approximately \$2300 annually.² Adding a free house, perquisites, and other gifts frequently a part of a pastor's existence, one would naturally wish to thank God for such blessings. Those situations, however, were hardly representative of downtrodden Americans of that day. Moreover, a person who had to accept relief in order to live, might wish to ask why the gospel hadn't established the kingdom of God on earth, if it indeed was "completely capable" of so doing.³

Troeltsch's characterization was also illustrated in church periodicals. One man, for example, wrote describing a family with five or six children who were forced to live on fifty-five cents a week donated to them by the township. The writer then made this statement:

¹East Pennsylvania Synod, Minutes (1933), p. 142.

²Ibid. (1931), p. 154.

³Clerical preoccupation with group survival was also reflected in some synods where, in reference to the unemployment situation, only the unemployed clergy were mentioned. See Illinois Synod, Minutes (1935), p. 24; and Synod of Iowa, ibid. (1932), p. 10. Others found it impossible to go beyond thinking of welfare and relief in talking about the depression's effects. See Pacific Synod, ibid. (1935), p. 28; English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the Northwest, ibid. (1932), p. 65; West Virginia Synod, ibid. (1931), p. 50; Synod of South Carolina, ibid. (1937), pp. 97-98; and (1939), pp. 79-80.

In the face of such a situation we believe there is a real challenge facing the Lutheran churches of our city. While we may not be able to offer financial assistance or food, we can so preach the gospel that hearts and minds will be kept from socialistic and communistic thoughts. In our own parish we hope to conduct a mission of evangelism for two weeks and to keep the minds of our parishioners stayed upon God's providential love.¹

Counter views were expressed both by individuals and conventions, national as well as synodical. Dr. Raymond Stamm, professor at Gettysburg Seminary, reflected the growing edge within the ULCA when he struck heavily at Lutheran quietism in 1931 by attacking two commonly held views. First, he criticized the rigid separation of church and state upon which some insisted, which, in effect, maintained two completely separate spheres of activity between which contact was not allowed. Second, he criticized the idea that the gospel would properly motivate people so that further help to them on social issues was not necessary. Christians needed "the spur and the support of a strong, sustained body of Christian public opinion," Stamm wrote, saying:

The church has not by any means done its full duty when it has provided the Christian with the Gospel and has informed him that his Lord expects him to do his full duty by the state. It ought to go further and help him . . .²

In his article, Stamm identified one of the major problems confronting American Lutheranism, namely the over-emphasis of the priestly function of the clergy to the neglect of the prophetic. Stamm wrote:

¹W. Rufus Rings, "Industrial Situation," Lutheran, October 6, 1932, p. 24.

²"The Lag between the Ethics of the State and the Ethics of the Kingdom of God," Lutheran Church Quarterly, IV (July, 1931), pp. 233-237 and 247-250.

Ministers themselves are often tempted to escape the severe discipline of the necessary study and possible persecution attendant upon the exercise of their prophetic calling by taking refuge in their priestly function and overstressing it. Such thorny subjects as prohibition, unlimited acquisition of private property and profit, war in its chronic state of industrial and commercial competition, and war in its acute stage of actual physical conflict can readily be relegated to the conscience of the individual church member without making him feel the full force of the Christian imperative to apply the spirit of the Christ who is mediated through Word and Sacrament to every situation of human life here and now, and without giving him the necessary help in doing it.

.....
it ought to be taken for granted that preachers and editors have not only the right but also the inescapable duty of prophetic application of the ideals of Jesus to every phase of human life. If their respective constituencies will not permit them to do so, they must boldly proceed to enlighten and persuade them, and if they still resist, to move on fearlessly without them. Our leaders will have to break the vicious circle set up by that portion of the pulpit and the press which has chosen to treat these subjects as "secular", drilling into the minds of their laity the notion that those who do preach about them are not preaching "the pure Gospel", and the same laymen, who, having discovered in this dualism a possible escape from the personal sacrifice necessary to secure a new and more righteous order in this world, react by insisting that their preachers shall "not meddle with politics". That vicious circle must be broken and bent into a spiral of mutual stimulation wherewith to ascend toward the ideal.¹

Other writers joined in support of the basic contentions expressed by Professor Stamm. Defense was offered for the social gospel, as well as for the controversial Harry Emerson Fosdick, and calls for new attitudes toward "social Christianity."²

ULCA President F. H. Knubel joined the debate saying that the ,

¹Stamm, "The Lag between the Ethics of the State and the Ethics of the Kingdom of God," Lutheran Church Quarterly, IV (July, 1931), pp. 247-249.

²See W. Harold Redcay, "Revitalizing Christian Doctrine," ibid., VII (October, 1934), pp. 337-359; C. F. Sanders, "Civilization Is Sick: What Can Be Done about It?", ibid., VII (July, 1934), pp. 296-306; Morris Greth, "Social Problems and the Christian Church," ibid., VI (July, 1933), pp. 294-299; and Hugo L. Dressler, "Religion in an Era of Social Change," ibid., VIII (April, 1935), pp. 133-150.

church, without being a drone, must at times be the conscience of the state.¹ ULCA Secretary W. H. Greever contended that socialization of the present order was inevitable and hence the Christian church should ensure that the process developed into a Christian socialization.² Even the Lutheran, which was not too attuned to the growing edge during this era,³ reflected some adjustments. The paper editorially denounced sweat shops, endorsed the NIRA, remarked that "the pulpit in its determination to keep out of politics is not thereby absolved from dealing with morality and equity in human affairs,"⁴ and printed articles by Henry Wallace criticizing rugged individualism and calling for government action on behalf of a greater social justice.⁵ Abdel Ross Wentz summoned the authority of Luther to the support of social change by contending that, if Luther were alive, he would point out the weaknesses of the present economy, denounce luxuries and soft living, demand a more equitable distribution of the products of labor, and encourage what was

¹Knubel, "Society, the State, and the Church," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XII (July, 1939), p. 241.

²"The Church and Socialization," Lutheran, January 11, 1934, pp. 3-4.

³See "That Five-Day Week," ibid., October 6, 1932, p. 14; "Across the Desk," ibid., January 31, 1935, p. 15; "Religion and Industry," ibid., August 30, 1939, p. 14; "Prayer and Industry," ibid., August 31, 1938, p. 14; "Is There a Christian Communism?", ibid., February 11, 1937, p. 13; and "Back of the Strike," ibid., September 20, 1934, p. 14.

⁴"Sweat Shop Horrors," ibid., December 1, 1932, p. 15; "The Church and the N.I.R.A.," ibid., August 3, 1933, p. 18; and "Labor Day," September 2, ibid., August 23, 1934, p. 16.

⁵"Statesmanship and Religion," ibid., January 4, 1934, pp. 4ff.; and "Protestant Endurance in America," ibid., August 3, 1933, pp. 3-4.

called the growing sense of social responsibility among industrial leaders.¹

The appeal from the pulpit was apparently also changing. Dr. E. C. Cooper, for example, preached a Lenten Sermon to a congregation in Shelby, North Carolina where a strike in the textile mills was under-way. The sermon sounded like those preached by Washington Gladden in the early days of the social gospel. Cooper maintained that capital should recognize that persons doing the hard, dirty, disagreeable, and dangerous work had never received their due share of returns. Since laborers were human beings with personalities, capital ought to recognize them as persons rather than as commodities, he maintained, and not subject the working man to unnecessary machine hazards, hot and dirty air, and long, over-worked hours with little pay. While disallowing the right to strike, Cooper defended the right of labor to bargain collectively, called on management to reduce the proportionate salaries for themselves because their rate was unfair to the worker, and suggested that less profit be held for the owners. Cooper further endorsed "the growth of public ownership," especially concerning public utilities.²

Turning to labor, Dr. Cooper urged a greater respect for life and the rights of others, counselled against violence, and talked about responsibility concerning labor's new power and freedom. He called for cooperation in industrial matters and said that laborers

¹Wentz, "Martin Luther and Modern Business," Lutheran Church Quarterly, VII (January, 1934), pp. 41-54.

²"Obligations of Industry and Labor," Lutheran, April 5, 1934, pp. 9-10.

should expect stricter rules of discipline to accompany higher pay and shorter hours.¹

In view of these sentiments, it is not surprising that some of the synods began to express their social concerns in response to the burden of the depression. The Maryland Synod Committee on Moral and Social Welfare said in 1930 that

the solution of the problems of property is the application of the Golden Rule in business and industry. As men come to realize that they are "neighbors" to assist and comfort each other they will find the solution of their practical problems in the love of which the Nazareth Carpenter spoke.²

The committee at different times recommended that sermons be preached on such subjects as "Christian Altruism," "Saving Others at Personal Expense," "Jesus and the Unemployed," "Jesus and the Financial Situation," and "The Doctrine of Love and the Profit Motive." At the 1934 convention, the committee report said that "to say that religion is entirely an individualistic affair in such a day of challenge and opportunity is to forget the message of the Hebrew prophets and the example of Jesus." The report went on to say that "the church must assist in creating the atmosphere for the solution of our moral and social problems. There is probably nothing in America more antiquated than business ethics." The following year the committee brought in a report which spoke of unemployment, slums, poverty, and war. Among other things it said that

it is also our conviction that, when human nature has been spiritually regenerated, the Church must provide guidance for her members

¹Cooper, "Obligations of Industry and Labor," Lutheran, April 15, 1934, pp. 9-10.

²Maryland Synod, Minutes (1930), p. 95.

in all social relationships to guard against provincial and individualistic religion, against exclusive social attitudes, and against a personal ethic without social implications, and to assist in finding a solution of the many perplexing problems of the practical world.¹

The Susquehanna Synod said in 1936 that "it is imperative that the Church take a definite stand on moral and social issues." This departure from the old quietistic stance was necessary, the synod said, "in view of the unhappy condition of our nation at this time, with a prolonged depression, social discontent, unlimited quest for pleasure, gross materialism, growing intemperance, break-up of the home, spiritual indifference, defeatism and despair . . ."² It is significant that the reasons given for justifying social action were largely sociological, economic, and cultural in nature rather than theological. A year later the committee said:

The sphere of Christian activity has been limited too long to the home, the school, and the church. We must accept the truth of Christ as applicable to the physical, mental and moral alike. Better homes, working conditions, wages, industrial relations, international affairs are the province of the religion of Jesus as much as prayer, child nurture and family life. The church ministers to life in all relationships; no area is beyond its province.³

The first report of the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare of the Pittsburgh Synod said that "the chief task of this committee shall be to awaken a consciousness of social sins and social tasks confronting the individual, the congregation and the community (local, national and international)." The method of action was to "work for an enlightened conscience, which will make for the type of legislation

¹Maryland Synod, Minutes (1930), p. 96; (1933), p. 38; (1934), p. 79; and (1935), p. 99.

²Susquehanna Synod, ibid. (1936), p. 96.

³Ibid. (1937), pp. 81-82.

desired, and not for specific candidates or legislative bills."¹

The most specific statement concerning economic affairs to be adopted during this period by any ULCA synod was passed by the Pittsburgh Synod in 1937. The statement affirmed that "the church is vitally concerned with the ethical relation of our industrial and commercial life." While no system could be designated Christian in contrast to others, the report said, the teachings of Jesus ought to be applied to all areas of industrial life. In saying this, the synod expressed a growing consensus within the ULCA that what Jesus taught not only was known but could be directly applied to social strife. The present order, the report continued, had failed to attain Christian standards in many areas. For example: human welfare was subordinated to profit, women and children were exploited, workers were exposed to dangerous working conditions and disease, industry had been depersonalized, resources had been wasted, and suspicion existed between employer and employee, it was said. The synod therefore resolved:

- 1) That, we urge the practice of Christian principles of brotherhood, cooperation, and concern for the common welfare in all economic relationships.
- 2) That, we urge that those who work be given a sustaining wage and a just share in the products of agriculture and industry.
- 3) That, we urge the safeguarding of all workers, urban and rural, against harmful conditions of labor and occupational injury.
- 4) That, we endorse the principle of social insurance against sickness, accidents, want in old age, and unemployment.
- 5) That children of tender ages should not be deprived of reasonable opportunities for normal development, and we condemn exploitation of children by their parents and employers.
- 6) That, we urge that the worker give an honest return for his wages and that both employer and employees be concerned for the common good.
- 7) That, we urge pastors and churches, and classes and groups to organize to study courses on the significance of the Gospel in its application to modern economic problems.²

¹Pittsburgh Synod, Minutes (1935), p. 124.

²Ibid. (1937), pp. 172-173.

In 1931, the New York Synod voted to appoint a committee to study the moral and ethical problems of the day and to make statements and recommendations to the church. The intent was not to speak to social groups outside the church, but to address considerations to the synod's own membership. The following year the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare brought in a report which said the depression had developed because of "our unbridled greed, our warped judgment, our undisciplined passions," for which all were responsible. The committee called for a "more intelligent and equitable" social control in which lawmakers and financial leaders built a social order on the sacredness of human personality, and urged that serious study be given to such items as unemployment insurance, old age pensions, prohibition of child labor, minimum wages, reduction in working time, and better coordination of production and distribution. The convention voted, however, to send the report back to committee.¹

A somewhat different position from the other synods was taken during the late 30's by the Synod of Ohio. That group received reports from its committee on social problems in 1938 and 1939 which not only rejected the social gospel but the growing trend within the ULCA as well to issue statements on social issues. The reports bore the imprint of Joseph Sittler, Jr., a social action committee member.

The 1938 statement began by asserting that Reformed Protestants were wrong in contending that the Christian life could be legislated. Such a life could only flow from faith, it was said. The report pleaded for a distinction between civil righteousness and the righteous-

¹United Lutheran Synod of New York, Minutes (1931), p. 200; and (1932), pp. 158-160.

ness of God, contending that the approximation of justice was a task of reason, not of the gospel. Having divided the civic and religious life in this manner, the committee then proceeded to affirm that "there is and can be no such thing as a 'Christian state.'"¹

Fear of a new legalism seems to have dominated the Ohio committee at this time as it expressed ideas Sittler was to develop and publish after World War II. In 1939 the committee said all righteousness referred to as "social justice, security, international accord," was really a legal righteousness on the level of Moses rather than a true righteousness on the level of Christ because such righteousness was sought by the law rather than the gospel. The report continued:

The ethical life of the Gospel transmitted into normative regulations takes on the visage of a legalism which is false to the ethical dynamic resident in the believer. Any "categorical imperative", regardless of its philosophical elevation or its humane nobility, is untrue to the peculiarity and immediacy of the will to God's Good which the Gospel creates in each believer as an individual.²

Arguing that the New Testament gave primacy to the individual rather than to society, the report said the church dare have no commerce with what was termed the current trend to introduce a norm into sanctification. Attempts on the part of the churches to make statements on given subjects were rejected on the ground that such statements took on religious significance and tended to become normative for the Christian's faith. To do this was to make a moralism out of the gospel, it was argued. The modern church was accused of attempting to "reconstitute of Christ a law-giver, an exalted international Moses." For Lutherans to do this, the report continued, would be to sell "her most powerful

¹Synod of Ohio, Minutes (1938), pp. 81-91.

²Ibid. (1939), p. 67.

theological and cultural heritage for a dubious pottage of contemporaneousness and prestige." The report denied that such a stand represented moral languor or insensitivity. Instead, it was argued that the effort to preserve the "peculiarity of the Gospel" from being clothed in legal garments was really "the most positive and aggressive position in Christendom, for it dares to stand embattled in the confidence that the Gospel 'is and does what it says.'"¹ Ohio's position, however, was not representative of the trend within the ULCA.

The new direction in the ULCA was better illustrated by the Pittsburgh Synod than by the Ohio Synod. The new trend was reflected in national conventions as well, although that development moved slowly. Meeting in 1932, the ULCA addressed itself to the subject of the depression. The reference was significantly different from statements made in the other Lutheran churches under study in that the ULCA did not blame God for the economic chaos, nor did it appeal to providence. In addition it spoke, albeit mildly, about remedying the causes of the depression rather than merely calling for the alleviation of suffering.²

The 1932 convention voted to recommend widespread distribution and study of a statement which affirmed the church's "full responsibility" for the character of society. The statement said that inasmuch as "morality is primarily a personal matter," this responsibility would best be discharged through the impact of regenerate individuals on society.³ The church's first duty, therefore, was to convert the individual.

¹Ohio Synod, Minutes (1939), p. 68.

²ULCA, ibid. (1932), p. 418.

³It should be underscored that there was no basic disagreement within the ULCA concerning the importance of converting the individual. Throughout this entire period, ULCA speakers and writers either empha-

"The Gospel in the hearts of men regenerates and sanctifies so that such an ideal social order is effected and moral social welfare is achieved," the report said. This social ideal was visualized as the incorporation of truth, goodness, beauty, justice, and order into what was termed "a practical brotherhood," in which the regenerate lived in loving, unselfish service toward one another. This brotherhood was to be effected through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, teaching, witnessing, and ministrations of mercy. Through these means the gospel would permeate society "like the leaven in the lump," and effect "the only transformations possible for real moral and social welfare," the report said.¹

At one point the statement reflected an optimism almost Utopian, saying in part:

The execution of His plan, by the use of His means, through His approved measures would so exalt piety, and so invigorate and promote Christian brotherhood, and to develop Christian stewardship that an incorruptible citizenship would control the destinies of the state, wealth would become the servant of all, the conflict between labor and capital would cease, sex immorality with its diseases would disappear, divorce courts would be closed, leisure would be used for the enrichment of personality instead of indulgences in dissipations, the under-privileged would find open doors of opportunity, and this would be like another world. This all depends upon the faithfulness of the Church, which needs only actually to enlist, in active endeavor, everyone it has enrolled into nominal membership. No new program needs to be set up. No new machinery needs to be added. The great need is spiritual impulse. The responsibility rests ultimately, as primarily, upon

sized or took for granted the fact that conversion of the individual was the first step in any program of reform. The debate concerned the degree to which the individual should be instructed in the details of social action and the question whether the church ought corporately to address another institution or group within society on a specific social question. The growing edge emphasized corporate as well as individual responsibility whereas defenders of the older view emphasized the relation of the gospel to the individual. For an example of the latter, see an editorial, "Lutherans and Jesus' Social Gospel," Lutheran, November 14, 1935, p. 12.

¹ULCA, Minutes (1932), pp. 407-417.

the individual man in the church, . . . When we come down to the purely practical aspect of this matter, . . . we find the key to solution, . . . or to success . . . in the will to do.¹

Such optimism compares favorably to that of John Wesley in his "Character of a Methodist." The statement represents a lapse from the scrupulously negative evaluation which Lutherans generally tended to make of the human situation. It represents an effort to state a beautifully naive hope which rested within sections of Lutheranism concerning the efficacy of the Word. The latter was sometimes understood as the all-powerful means of grace which would, of its own accord, automatically work God's righteousness among men. In a sense, the convention statement represented the same kind of embarrassed frustration which the appeal to providence reflected in the other three bodies studied. The responsibility to make some verbal response to the needs of the day was apparently keenly felt. What evolved was an eschatological vision at a time when the old eon was still very present. This vision, like the hymns of providence, overlooked some other rather basic considerations. In this case, that which was overlooked was the continuing selfishness and sinfulness even of regenerate man.²

There was an interesting irony in this period. Lutherans had

¹ULCA, Minutes (1932), p. 417.

²Amos Traver, who wrote a column fairly regularly in the Lutheran during this period gave expression to the same kind optimism in the early 1940's. He described a Christian financier as one who would not be motivated by profit and who, finding profit incidental, would seek the greatest good for the greatest number. He spoke of the Christian statesman as one who lived above self-interest, who desired above all to secure something better for his people, who would not trade a future good for a present advantage, who would not accept advantage over other nations and who would not despoil other races. Such eulogies to perfection encourage cynicism about the church's capacity for social insight. See "Christian Financiers," Lutheran, October 1, 1941, p. 19; and "Christian Statesmen," ibid., October 8, 1941, p. 21.

refused to accept the high estimate of man which developed in early twentieth century American Protestantism. Yet some Lutherans momentarily lost their theological balance at the very moment when one of the oft-condemned though chastened social gospel leaders was saying there could be no "incorruptible" even though regenerate citizenship.¹

What was needed badly in all of American Lutheranism at this time as the summons for a socially relevant faith emerged, was a new social ethic. Persons representing the growing edge were calling for a new ethic although it was not yet formulated. Two study documents intended to fill the void were published during the 1930's. These were Facts and Forces in the Social Order by W. H. Greever, secretary of the ULCA, and Christian Social Science by E. P. Pfatteicher, president of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

Greever's pamphlet included a slight elaboration of the 1932 report of the Committee on Moral and Social Problems, of which he had served as chairman. This work was published at the request of the committee in its effort to carry out the wishes of the 1932 convention for widespread study of social issues. Pfatteicher's work tended to emphasize generalities and lacked realistic specifics. He referred, for example, to what he termed the need for "moral values" and "moral victories" and for the application of the law of love to society. He spoke of a commonwealth of nations which was to grow out of the missionary endeavors of the churches and said that the church "must proceed more rapidly and more effectively with the christianization of the men and

¹See Reinhold Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, (New York, 1932).

women who represent us in our legislative halls."¹ Perhaps, however, the irenic spirit in which these two publications were written encouraged people, rather than alienated them, to a continuing study of the questions raised.

Other important beginnings in the formulation of a different social ethic were inaugurated in the ULCA during the 1930's by the national Committee on Moral and Social Welfare. In 1936 it presented to the national convention a fairly lengthy statement together with eighteen recommendations touching on such subjects as business injustices, Christian education, gambling, indecent literature, liquor, marriage and divorce, motion pictures, war and peace. This convention has been characterized by Donald Meyer as the first in ULCA history which "went through genuine and serious debate over the report of the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare."²

Concerning industry, the report stated:

Christian business men, like all followers of our Lord, are solemnly obligated to act as God's stewards. Capital and labor are meant to work together co-operatively in public service rather than in opposition to each other for selfish ends. The earnings and profits of a business should be justly distributed among all parties to the business. The exploitation of wage earners ought not be tolerated in civilized society. Ruthless, predatory competition among business enterprises should be halted.³

The discussions and thought which were provoked in the ULCA by such statements served both to reflect a growing social concern and to act as a catalyst in the attempt to formulate a new social platform.⁴

¹E. P. Pfatteicher, Christian Social Service (New York, 1933), pp. 61ff., 90ff., and 107.

²The Protestant Search for Political Realism, p. 345.

³ULCA, Minutes (1936), pp. 371-372.

⁴See for example, Harry William Lammond, "Reflections on the

The men's auxiliary of the ULCA, known as the Lutheran Brotherhood, had joined the new movement when it voted at its 1934 convention to adopt what was called the Fifth Objective. It urged Christian individuals and groups to begin "forthwith" a careful analysis and formulation of a "Christian viewpoint" concerning "all moral, social, economic and governmental problems and issues that now confront our social order."

The Objective expressed the hope that

a general Christian viewpoint may ultimately emerge to aid the authorities of the nation in leading us as a God-fearing people, through legislation and otherwise, to a right solution of our present crisis, that the kingdoms of this world may become "the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ."

The group also voted to request the clergy to "do all in their power to properly stimulate the effective carrying out of this resolution among the laity of their respective congregations."¹

This act represented an abrupt departure from the quietism of the past. Laymen were calling for an end to the aloofness in the pulpit from concrete affairs of the everyday world. They were asking the church to do essentially what the social gospel had sought to do, namely to use the insights of the gospel to guide men, individually and in groups, in relation to social issues.

Mr. Heiby Ungerer of the Synod of New York was the author of the Fifth Objective. He said that he had proposed it because he felt the church had been too silent on public issues. He contended that laymen had more faith than the clergy in the possibility for fashioning a

Gospel and Our Social Ills," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XIII (January, 1940), p. 45; Oscar Blackwelder, "The Church and Society; a Symposium. The Obligation of the Church," ibid., XVII (October, 1944), p. 361; and E. Theodore Bachmann, "The Church's Duty to Society," Lutheran, March 8, 1944, p. 6.

¹ULCA, Minutes (1934), pp. 429-430.

better world. He admitted that a perfect order was not an attainable option but argued that such a fact did not absolve one from attempting to work for a better alternative to the status quo. To make the Objective operative in the brotherhoods, Ungerer outlined suggested topics for brotherhood study during 1935. These included such subjects as, "Service as Distinguished from the Profit Motive for Individual Initiative," "Rival Types of Collectivism in Governmental Theory," "Economic Security for the Individual," "National Experiments to Date for Economic Recovery," "Taxation as Means for Relieving Poverty," "Providing Employment," and "Redistribution of Wealth." Other topics suggested included movies, temperance, gambling, old age pensions, birth control, collective bargaining, and international relationships.¹

Despite the Fifth Objective, however, articles appearing in the Brotherhood publication, Lutheran Men,² during the early part of the 30's, expressed the traditional quietistic view with its emphasis on personal evangelism and loyalty to the status quo.³ This conservative tone generally characterized articles of this publication so long as the Rev. J. W. Kapp was editor.⁴ Beginning in 1938 a shift of emphasis occurred. Blind loyalty to the state was attacked and the right to

¹"The Fifth Objective," Lutheran, January 10, 1935, pp. 4-5; and "Christian Citizenship," ibid., May 28, 1936, p. 11.

²Lutheran Men did not become a strictly ULCA publication until early in 1938. Prior to that time it was also listed as the official organ of the American Federation of Lutheran Brotherhoods, although it was published even then largely under ULCA auspices.

³See such articles as "The Topic," Lutheran Men, January, 1934, p. 4; May, 1934, p. 3; and "The Monthly Meeting," ibid., July, 1933.

⁴See also V. V. Aderholdt, "The Church and the Economic New Deal," ibid., May, 1935, p. 10; and J. B. Ascham, "The End of Poverty," ibid., November, 1934, p. 9.

criticize was invoked. Divine sanction was withheld from democracy as well as monarchy, communism, and totalitarianism. Shailer Mathews was quoted to the effect that a government was Christian, not according to form, but in so far as it attempted to realize the love underlying the teachings of Jesus.¹ Articles were usually general and non specific and only on occasion proposed a more militant approach.²

There was during this era, therefore, no even development. Nevertheless, a review of actions by synodical and national conventions and of articles written in the church press during this period points to the conclusion that the depression did affect the ULCA as it thought about social issues. The economic problems seem to have alarmed the ULCA and to have assisted that body to move in the direction of a broadening social responsibility. Despite the trend, however, the ULCA

¹See "What Does a Christian Owe the State?", Lutheran Men, July, 1938, p. 10; and "Democracy, Monarchy, Communism or Totalitarianism," ibid. The Rev. Arthur Getz began to write the "Topic for the Month" in 1939 for Lutheran Men. He focused on some of the more crude aspects of capitalism and discussed ways to promote world peace. See for example, April, 1939, pp. 15-16; May, 1939, p. 16; June, 1939, p. 15; January, 1940, p. 20; May, 1940, p. 19; July, 1940, pp. 19-20; October, 1940, pp. 19-20; April, 1943, pp. 18-19; July, 1943, pp. 18-19; September, 1943, pp. 18-19; and October, 1943, pp. 18-19.

²For a rather typical approach in Lutheran Men, see for example, C. E. Krumbholtz, "The Duty of the Church in Its Social Relationships with Reference to the Ministry of Mercy," June, 1939, p. 17; William E. Zschiesche, "Fifth Objective," July, 1939, p. 5; W. H. Greever, "Lutheranism's Contribution to a Christian World," May, 1940, p. 22; Andreas Bard, "Christian Men and Politics," July, 1940, p. 21; and C. Franklin Koch, "Practical Christian Citizenship," August, 1941, p. 21. For a more militant approach, see for example the following articles appearing in Lutheran Men: "The Topic for the Month," June, 1939, p. 15; July, 1943, pp. 18-19; and October, 1943, pp. 18-19; J. B. Baker, "Race Problems and Foreign Missions," January, 1940, p. 21; G. H. Bechtold, "Recent Social Trends," October, 1940, pp. 21-22; and Victor L. Johnson, "Economic Conditions and the Church," July, 1943, p. 20. See also Ralph Owen, "Economic Security for the Individual," Lutheran, April 11, 1935, p. 10; and William Zimmerman, "Rival Types of Collectivism in Governmental Theory," ibid., March 28, 1935, p. 5.

did not move as far forward or to the "left" as did the Methodists or the Northern Presbyterians, for example, as Robert Miller has shown.¹ The era from 1930 to 1944 was one of early transition in which social forces prodded the church to examine its own posture.

Social Action: A New Structure

Progress toward the goal of greater social responsibility on the part of the ULCA was achieved by a decision of the 1938 convention. At that time, delegates voted to merge the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare with the Committee on Evangelism and the Board of Inner Missions to form a new structure called the Board of Social Missions.²

This action was symbolic of the growing emphasis in the ULCA. The church had been critical of the social gospel because the latter was considered too preoccupied with environmental reform. As over against this, the ULCA had placed a strong emphasis on the preaching of the Word to convert the individual. This effort was coupled with a ministry of mercy to the suffering groups within society. As time progressed, the ULCA had come to see that these two activities were not sufficient and had established the independent Committee on Moral and Social Welfare. After operating for a score of years in this manner, the ULCA decided that the three-pronged effort should be integrated and coordinated to express the wholeness of their theological position.

That position, briefly stated, was that the individual had to be converted first, structural and environmental changes were necessary and useful, and love compelled the church to care for the needy, the

¹American Protestantism and Social Issues, pp. 63ff.

²ULCA, Minutes (1938), p. 108.

orphaned, and the widowed. Henceforth, therefore, the ULCA would consciously relate to society in terms of an evangelistic thrust to convert the individual. This would be followed by concrete guidance in the sphere of social action, coupled with a ministry of mercy to the needy, the suffering, and the neglected. This attempt to relate to society in terms of the wholeness of their theological position, perhaps more than any other single item, marked the advanced position of ULCA social consciousness during this period over against the three other churches being studied.

To be sure, the board did not give uniform emphasis to all three phases of its work at the beginning. First priority was given to evangelism and second to inner missions. Social action thus was given only minimal attention during this period. This was true not only nationally but also synodically. This situation was illustrated, for example, by the fact that the first two departments within the Board of Social Missions to be given full-time national directors were evangelism and inner missions. Efforts of the social action department to engage a full-time director were defeated by the social missions board as late as December, 1944. Moreover, not all synod boards of social missions immediately appointed sub-committees on social action.¹

Despite these facts, however, it must be emphasized that the ULCA had given birth to an idea distinct from the other Lutheran bodies. The idea was noteworthy because the structure created by the church through which to relate itself to society was designed for theological rather than organizational reasons. Theologically, the ULCA held,

¹Minutes of the ULCA Board of Social Missions, June 11, 1942, p. 6; December 10, 1942, p. 2; December 14, 1944, pp. 7 and 15; and December 9, 1943, p. 18 (in the files of the Board).

evangelism, inner missions, and social action belonged together and therefore they were so structured organizationally. More than a decade was to pass before social action was to be given its full emphasis within the board's activities. But, because of the theological idea which brought the board into being, social action was able to grow within the framework of the board as a legitimate son rather than as an adopted stepchild. Social action belonged theologically and therefore structurally to the ULCA's understanding of its mission in the world.

The most important step relating to social action taken by the social missions board during the first six years of its existence was to schedule a few social institutes throughout the ULCA to study the general question of the relation of the church to society. Commenting in the Social Missions Quarterly on one of the first of these seminars, Dr. E. E. Flack of the social missions board reported that it was the sense of a group meeting at Wagner College on Staten Island that "more courageous church action" was required.¹ Attendance at the institutes jumped sharply in a short period of time. In 1940, some 224 persons registered for four institutes. A year later, a series of conferences about the church and industrial society was attended by approximately 1200 clergy and laymen.² At the end of the period under consideration, Dr. Franklin Koch, first administrative officer of the Board of Social Missions, reported that response to the institutes was still increasing numerically, both by clergy and laity.³ He further reported receiving

¹"Seminar on Social Action," Social Missions Quarterly, III (September 15, 1942), p. 2.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 8, 1940, p. 86; and May 8, 1941, p. 195.

³"Social Action Institutes," Lutheran, October 4, 1944, p. 18.

an increasing number of requests for statements concerning the church's position on such issues as labor, race, and the FEPC.¹

In the field of social action, the board proceeded timidly and spoke chiefly in generalities. Their actions, however, did begin to move the church further along the road to responsible social action. Late in 1941, the board voted among other things to "urge our pastors and congregations to encourage Christian men and women to assume responsibilities in local organizations . . . to secure legislative action and law enforcement against social evils . . ." They also voted

to study sympathetically labor problems in their communities, to mingle with laboring men in their industrial situations and in meetings of their organizations, to initiate interests which in a positive way may counterbalance the radical elements in labor unions, and to seek in every proper way to restore Christianity to its rightful place in the minds of the masses.²

In a tentative outline for Institutes on Social Action in 1944, the social missions board defined social action, in part, as

the effort of individuals or groups, impelled by the Spirit of God, through love of their fellow-men, to seek to relieve, restrain and prevent certain forms of physical, social, economic and spiritual evils; and to restore, recreate, and strengthen the lives of individuals and communities, thus striving for the realization of a social order in which truth, justice, brotherhood and love shall prevail, to the end that the purposes of God may be accomplished in human lives.

The problems itemized demanding action were race, labor-management, delinquency, family and divorce, war, gambling, penal and detention practices, illiteracy, personality debasing political and economic ideologies, corruption of public office, alcoholism, prostitution, anti-semitism, and atheism.³

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, December 14, 1944, p. 7.

²Ibid., December 11, 1941, p. 250.

³Ibid., May 11, 1944, p. 1.

Some twenty-two items were listed as suggestions for congregational action. Included among them were proposals that pastors preach and teach the social relevance of the gospel, that congregational social action committees be organized, that efforts be made to present the facts about issues to counteract rumor and hearsay, that churches relate themselves to other social agencies of the community, and that congregations sponsor forums and classes on social issues by arranging for representatives of such organizations as labor, management, and farm groups to speak to the people.¹ Such forums had been created by Washington Gladden and had been incorporated as a part of the social gospel program from the beginning of that movement.

An indication of the emerging attitude had been reflected in an uncontrolled poll taken of ULCA clergymen by Dr. E. E. Flack in 1939. Flack found that the majority of the clergy believed the church had a social responsibility in addition to preaching the Word and administering the sacraments. Moreover, he discovered that a majority also rejected "quietism" as an adequate stance for America because of the weakness of the German example.²

As the ULCA moved into the 1940's, a broader concern for social action reflected itself on a number of different occasions. "The Church Cares for the Redemption of Society," proclaimed an advertisement sponsored by the Board of Social Missions in a 1940 issue of the *Lutheran*.³ A year earlier, the Lutheran Social Fellowship had been formed. The so-

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, May 11, 1944, p. 3.

²"What Pastors Think?", *Lutheran*, October 18, 1939, pp. 4-5, and October 25, 1939, pp. 6-7.

³*Ibid.*, October 9, 1940, p. 32.

ciety adopted four goals. They decided to deal with the theological basis for Christian attitudes concerning social and economic questions and to consider openly and freely questions within Lutheranism concerning social issues. The group further espoused the hope "to arouse the social consciousness of the Lutheran Church" and "to give heart and courage to individual members who in the field of their daily labors are wrestling with an overwhelming environment of conservatism and lethargy of social consciousness."¹

As this period being studied ends, persons within the ULCA were acknowledging the development of concern along the lines desired by the Fellowship. "There is a growing social consciousness in the Lutheran Church, particularly among the younger clergy," a Philadelphia pastor wrote.² Dr. Franklin Koch wrote in the Lutheran that "increasingly among the members of the church, and I believe also among the officials of the church, is the conviction that the church has a responsibility for shaping the social order."³ Such an attitude was not quietistic.

Reaction to the Threat and Reality of War

The ULCA was born during the year ending World War I. Perhaps it was therefore not accidental that this church reflected a consciousness of war from the beginning of its existence. The majority within the church had sanctioned the possibility of a war, although a strong minority had spoken otherwise. At the 1930 convention, the ULCA wrestled

¹L. Ralph Tabor, "The Lutheran Social Fellowship," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XIII (July, 1940), pp. 293-296.

²T. Benton Peery, "More about Lutheran Preaching Today," ibid., IV (April, 1941), pp. 206-209.

³See "Signs of the Times," Lutheran, May 13, 1942, p. 9; and "Our Christian Social Conscience," ibid., October 1, 1941, p. 6.

with a re-assessment of its 1924 statement that a Christian could engage in a just war. The Committee on Moral and Social Welfare proposed a statement which acknowledged the right of Christians to serve as soldiers. Such a possibility was viewed as a relative obligation rather than as an absolute one, and was left to the individual to determine in his own conscience what he ought to do. The report said that the church

may lay down the general principle that the State is a divine institution, and that under certain circumstances it may become the duty of the Christian to defend the State even at the cost of human life. But what these circumstances must be, or in what way one is to lay down his life, cannot be determined by the Church. Here the individual conscience can alone serve as sufficient guide.¹

The report apparently did not satisfy everyone because the convention voted only to receive rather than adopt the report. Resolutions which were adopted called on the church to support all peaceful methods of arbitration to settle disputes and avoid armed conflict.²

In 1936, the war question was back on the convention agenda. The Committee on Moral and Social Welfare viewed with disapproval the growing war tension and the fact that the United States had voted its highest peace-time military budget. The committee proceeded to recommend neutrality in the event of war and limitation of military expenditures. The convention, however, was not of the same mind as the committee and therefore voted to drop such a recommendation. Instead they voted to "reaffirm our devotion to the cause of peace" and to urge people to cooperate in efforts to promote peace. The delegates requested the educational agencies of the church to provide studies for church members on ways to avoid war. These measures included mandatory neutrality

¹ULCA, Minutes (1930), p. 114.

²Ibid., pp. 115-116.

legislation, removal of munitions manufacture from private industry, limitation of military expenditures, and a popular referendum before the United States could enter a war, except in the case of invasion.¹

Discussion of the war question during the 30's at the synodical level reflected a growing concern for the eradication of war. A resolution adopted by the East Pennsylvania Synod in 1930 said that, regardless of past justifications for war, "we believe that in these times, and under these conditions, war is a heinous sin against civilization, against humanity, and against God." The resolution went on to say that "the immediate responsibility of America" called for cooperation in all international efforts "to promote mutual understanding, appreciation and cooperation among the nations and races of the world," for support of United States membership in the world court, and for a restudy of America's relationship to the League of Nations.²

At the Indiana Synod convention in 1938, a Commission on Questions and Problems of War rejected the distinction between wars of defense and of aggression. Instead, it said that Christians should recognize that wars were an "utterly unjustifiable method of settling international disputes, and that other, saner, civilized and Christian methods of settling disputes must be found." Hence the commission called for the establishment of an international tribunal to adjudicate differences.³

The Maryland Synod voted in 1935 to say that it was "inconsistent for the church to approve war as an institution" and summoned the church to show the world how abhorrent and unsatisfactory such a

¹ULCA, Minutes (1936), pp. 377-378.

²East Pennsylvania Synod, Minutes (1930), pp. 140-141.

³Indiana Synod, ibid. (1938), p. 52.

process was for the settlement of disputes. Susquehanna joined the call for the settlement of disputes through arbitration and declared itself "unalterably opposed to war."¹

The Pittsburgh Synod, which had expressed concern about a number of other social issues, joined the chorus of voices opposed to war in 1935. That year the convention adopted a resolution which labeled war as a violation of the teachings of Jesus concerning mercy, truthfulness, and love. The statement spoke of the futility of attempting to settle disputes through violence, argued that war jeopardized religious and political liberty, and contended that money spent for war could better be spent for other items. Hence the delegates called for an international agreement to reduce armaments, urged that the manufacture and sale of the latter be placed under strict national control with a limitation on profits, supported an embargo on the shipment of arms to foreign countries, and asserted the primacy of conscience in matters relating to the bearing of arms. The following year similar sentiments were expressed, although an amendment was added saying the church could not sanction war "except as a last resort for the maintenance of right."²

The New York Synod had repudiated war as "unchristian and morally indefensible" as early as 1932. That year the synod also voted its support for the Briand-Kellogg Peace Pact, the settlement of disputes through arbitration, reduction in armaments, and the establishment of a court of international justice. Noting the materialistic drives of men,

¹Maryland Synod, Minutes (1935), pp. 101-102; and Susquehanna Synod, ibid. (1936), p. 96.

²Pittsburgh Synod, ibid. (1935), pp. 124-126; and (1936), p. 121.

the synod voted to urge that profits be removed from war industries.¹

It can therefore be said that all the ULCA synods which expressed themselves on the subject of war during the 1930's were critical of that institution and supported efforts to reduce armaments, settle international disputes by peaceful arbitration, and to promote international cooperation, understanding, and peace.

It can also be observed that most ULCA writers and publications during the 30's seem to have avoided what historical hindsight might now refer to as pitfalls concerning the Hitler regime. The Luther League Review, ULCA youth publication, provided an exception in an article defending Hitler in 1938. It was written by the Rev. Paul M. Kinports, executive secretary of the Luther League of America. In the article, Hitler was pictured favorably as the man who saved Germany from communism. Kinports quoted the Rev. Hans Kirsten of Hannover, Germany, as saying that "we Lutherans are grateful for this man. We believe, as do the majority of our people, that God sent this man to us just in time to tear us away from the abysmal depths into which Bolshevism threatened to hurl us." Kirsten was further quoted as saying that "the New Germany is a state guaranteeing absolute religious liberty. That this is the case becomes plainly evident from the repeated official utterances of its leading statesmen." Nazi party statements as well as excerpts from Hitler's first Reichstag address pledging religious freedom, were quoted. Reference was made to what was called a neo-paganism arising in Germany. Kirsten, however, was again apparently quoted as saying that

real as this menace is, just so unreal is the myth being industriously propagandized in foreign countries that the government is bending every effort toward replacing Christianity

¹New York Synod, Minutes (1932), p. 157.

with this heathenism, and with that end in view is actually persecuting the Christian Church. In reference to this common misconception I would like to assure you most emphatically: Not a single person in all Germany has thus far been made to feel obligated to renounce his Christianity in favor of Neo-Paganism. More than that: Not a single person in all Germany has thus far been persecuted or even underprivileged because of his Christian faith. Full religious freedom in Germany has not been a mere vision or theory. It has been and still is a very practical fact.¹

Despite that incident in the Review, there were no other serious efforts to defend Hitler. Editorials in the Lutheran defended the right of a nation to fight.² Strikingly different from Augustana and some other leading protestant groups, the ULCA voiced little support for pacifism in the 30's.³

When the ULCA met in Omaha late in 1940, the prospect of a war

¹Paul M. Kinports, "Hitler and the Church," Luther League Review, 50 (July-August, 1938), pp. 10-11. It is not completely clear from the article whether the indented quotation is from Kirsten or Kinports. The section under "Neo-Paganism" in Kinports' article begins by quoting Kirsten. However, there are no quotation marks to indicate where the quotation of Kirsten ends. The context, however, involving the use of the first person and suggesting a personal acquaintance with the German situation, leads me to ascribe the quotation to Kirsten rather than Kinports. It should also be noted that the article included a bibliography which listed articles in the Christian Century, Nation, and New Republic which referred to the persecution of Jews. For a more balanced and typical view of the articles appearing on this subject in ULCA periodicals, see F. H. Knubel, "Those German Christians," Lutheran, April 20, 1933, p. 4; and an unsigned article, "That Which We Call Nationalism," ibid., July 6, 1933, pp. 3-4.

²See for example, "Another War?," ibid., January 25, 1934, pp. 16-17; "Program of Peace Action," ibid., November 8, 1934, pp. 3-4; "Across the Desk," ibid., March 2, 1938, p. 15; and John A. Aman, "To Maintain Peace," ibid., November 26, 1936, pp. 3-4.

³As illustrative of pacifist appeals, see F. Eppling Reinartz, "The Church and War," Lutheran Church Quarterly, V (October, 1932), pp. 341-359; and "When Is a War Just?," Lutheran, March 22, 1939, pp. 8 and 11. See also D. L. Putman, "War and Religion: An Unholy Alliance," Lutheran Church Quarterly, IX (April, 1936), pp. 197-205; Howard Kunkle, "A Lutheran Pacifist Speaks," Lutheran, January 28, 1937, p. 8; and a Brotherhood article, "The Topic for July," Lutheran Men, (July-August, 1935), p. 5. For a description of other churches, see Miller, American Protestantism and Social Issues, pp. 317ff.

involving America was very real. About a month earlier, the Burke-Wadsworth Bill had been passed as the first peace-time conscription bill in United States history. Consequently the question of conscientious objection faced the convention squarely. The executive board presented a statement on the subject which was adopted after much debate. The statement said in part that it was the duty of the church to proclaim the gospel of redemption and peace. It went on to say that it was "the duty of the Christian citizen to obey and support lawful government. Concerning such duty we hold . . . 'it is right for Christians . . . to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, . . .'" The statement defended the possibility of a just war and asserted that "the Christian citizen is in duty bound to bear arms and to offer his life if need be in defense of his country."¹

While making this affirmation, the convention also acknowledged the right of conscientious objection to military service, although it was not as firm in its support of such activity as Augustana had been. The convention voted to say:

We believe that the conscience of the individual, informed and inspired by the Word of God, is the final authority in determining conduct. . . . Therefore, under this evangelical principle of freedom of conscience we recognize the individual right to conscientious objection to service in a war. Such recognition does not imply the Church's approval of such conscientious objection but does proclaim its devotion and respect for the Scriptural principle of the supreme moral responsibility of the individual conscience.²

ULCA president Knubel had appeared before the December, 1939 meeting of the Board of Social Missions to request that board to restudy and reinterpret the confessional statements concerning war. A brief

¹ULCA, Minutes (1940), p. 138.

²Ibid.

statement on the subject was prepared by the board and submitted to the 1940 convention, but it was set aside by the convention in favor of a statement proposed by the Executive Board. The significant difference between the statement proposed by the social missions group and that of the executive group was that the former did not include the cautious qualification that recognition of the right to conscientious objection did not imply the church's approval.¹

Five synods memorialized the 1940 ULCA convention concerning the conscientious objector. Central Pennsylvania had petitioned the convention to provide means for carrying into effect the Executive Board's acknowledgment of the individual's right to object. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania requested that the ULCA "ask exemption from military service for its conscientious objectors . . ." Pittsburgh asked that the objector's rights be recognized and provision made for his registration with local congregations prior to the outbreak of war. Rocky Mountain not only asked that the convention acknowledge such rights but that the convention also state its "willingness to support and to succor such members . . ." New York also asked that provision be made for registration of objectors.²

Despite the interest shown in objectors by such synodical action, however, the Board of Social Missions reported early in 1941 that, of the 1,822 men listed with the Selective Service administration as conscientious objectors, only eight were Lutheran. In June of that same year, the board voted to designate \$200 as an aid fund to the objectors.

¹ULCA, Minutes (1940), pp. 339, 341, and 344-345. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, December 14, 1939, p. 66; September 11, 1940, p. 126; and November 14, 1940, p. 131.

²ULCA, Minutes (1940), pp. 556-557.

Grass roots support for such persons appears to have been minimal. President C. M. Distler of the social missions board reported in mid-1943 that an appeal to congregations for money to pay expenses of the conscientious objectors in camps had netted only \$864.20. By August, 1943, the ULCA was \$2,351 in arrears in its payments to such camps. Statistics provided by the board in May, 1944, reveal that there were only 71 Lutherans in the civilian public service camps at that time.¹

Action at the synodical level during the 40's reflects a strong anti-war feeling, more akin to isolationism than pacifism, blended with a genuine concern for peace. In 1940, Central Pennsylvania, in addition to memorializing the ULCA about conscientious objectors, counseled their membership against what they referred to as the growing war hysteria. The following year they renewed their opposition to what was termed "the alarming march of our country toward deliberate armed intervention in the present world conflict," and said that the church could neither bless nor sanction war. After Pearl Harbor, the synod voted its support for the "Bases of a Just and Durable Peace," and to recommend congregational study of O. F. Nolde's Christian World Action.² Recommendations for study relating to a just and durable peace were also adopted or received by the Illinois, Kansas, Virginia, Texas, South Carolina, Pittsburgh, Pacific, and Ohio Synods.³

¹See Minutes, Board of Social Missions, May 8, 1941, p. 201; June 6, 1941, p. 214; May 13, 1943, p. 3; December 9, 1943, p. 3; and May 10, 1944, p. 1.

²Central Pennsylvania Synod, Minutes (1940), p. 138; (1941), pp. 126 and 195; and (1942), p. 121.

³Illinois Synod, ibid. (1943), p. 64; Kansas Synod, ibid. (1944), p. 51; Lutheran Synod of Virginia, ibid. (1942), p. 97; Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas, ibid. (1943), pp. 42-43; South Carolina Synod, ibid. (1942), p. 109; Pittsburgh Synod, ibid. (1942), p. 127; Pacific Synod, ibid. (1943), p. 61; and Ohio Synod, ibid. (1942), p. 68.

In 1941, Maryland Synod voted to send letters to President Roosevelt and Speaker Rayburn asking them to use their influence against the proposed use of convoys and other actions which might involve the United States in what was termed the European conflict.¹ Michigan in both 1940 and 1941 strongly protested involvement in armed conflict. Michigan congressmen and the President were petitioned to "maintain a strict and complete neutrality." Since war was said to be futile as a political means to settle disputes as well as a denial of God and Christ's teachings, the convention voted to "urge our national leaders to seek a negotiated peace."² That action was taken three years after Munich.

In 1942, the Committee on Social Missions for the Pittsburgh Synod outlined six guidelines for their congregations concerning the issue of war. The church, the committee said, must never preach hatred. Moreover, the church's prayer for the nation must always be conditioned by the will of God, it was stated. Christians were reminded of the injunction to them to love their enemy. The church was instructed to avoid propagating any of the state's war propaganda and instead was urged to study the "Bases of a Just and Durable Peace." In addition, the church was called on to minister effectively to the families of servicemen. A year later the committee called for the establishment of an international organization with sufficient power to restrain the ego and evil intent of nations.³ South Carolina, Kentucky, New York, and West Virginia also expressed concerns for the curbing of the war spirit

¹Maryland Synod, Minutes (1941), p. 40.

²Michigan Synod, ibid. (1940), p. 59; and (1941), p. 81.

³Pittsburgh Synod, ibid. (1942), pp. 126-128; and (1943), p. 118.

and the establishment of peace.¹

When the ULCA met for its biennial convention in Minneapolis in 1944, it had before it a recommendation from the Board of Social Missions that a seven-point "Inter-Faith Declaration on World Peace," be adopted. After discussion, it was voted to endorse an abridged statement incorporating the principles upon which the inter-faith statement was based.² The social missions board also asked the convention to protest the adoption of universal military training on the grounds that it was "inimical to the securing of peace among nations, detrimental to the best interests of our country and as constituting a militarization of national life from which European nations long have suffered." The convention responded by adopting a substitute motion which asked the federal government to postpone action on a UMT bill on the grounds that "the future military needs of our country will be known better after the war and when peace plans have been adopted."³

Discussion of the war question continued in the church press during the 1940's as it had done earlier. Two important ULCA leaders called attention to America's guilt or involvement in the world upheaval. President F. H. Knubel wrote that war was not God's will and that all Americans shared in the sins causing the war. In an article entitled, "War Came to the Nation in Advent," Dr. Knubel expressed regret for the

¹South Carolina Synod, Minutes (1941), pp. 102-105; (1942), pp. 109-111; (1943), p. 91; Kentucky-Tennessee Synod, ibid. (1940), p. 45; (1943), p. 55; New York Synod, ibid. (1940), p. 134; (1942), p. 149; and West Virginia Synod, ibid. (1945), pp. 47-48.

²ULCA, ibid. (1944), pp. 346 and 354. For a summary of the seven principles, see supra, p. 140. The Augustana Synod had adopted the entire statement.

³ULCA, Minutes (1944), pp. 347 and 354. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, June 22, 1944, p. 10.

war and said that all nations had to walk the path of mutual repentance and forgiveness. Similar thoughts were expressed by C. Franklin Koch, chief executive of the Board of Social Missions.¹

When war did envelop the United States, the Lutheran expressed support for the war effort and said that in doing so, it deemed itself "acting in obedience to God." In fact, the editorial writer went so far in his endorsement of war after Pearl Harbor that he wrote, "we cannot justify on the basis of religion any citizen's refusal of his services in behalf of victory over the government of Japan."² Thus the Lutheran disassociated itself editorially from the stand of the 1940 ULCA convention which had recognized the right to be a conscientious objector, without endorsing such action. The Luther League Review had done so as early as 1938 when it said that, "it is as wrong to evade paying taxes as it is to evade a war time draft."³

During the latter part of 1941 the Lutheran ran a series of articles dealing with the question of war and the Christian's response thereto. Dr. T. A. Kantonen, professor at Hamma Divinity School, argued against pacifism in defense of war. He agreed that war was sin, but argued abstention from sin was not an option in this world. Sometimes a war, evil though it might be, had better results in the end than not to have fought at all, he said, pointing out that the Bible did not sanction peace without justice. He argued that the biblical

¹Knubel, "Christian Realism as to War," Lutheran, March 5, 1941, p. 6; and "War Came to the Nation in Advent," ibid., December 24, 1941, p. 2. See also C. F. Koch, "The Function of the Church in a Time of War," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XVI (July, 1942), pp. 267-273.

²See "The Lutheran Church and War," Lutheran, December 24, 1941, p. 16; and "In Time of War," ibid., December 17, 1941, pp. 16-17.

³"Intermediate Topics for July-August," Luther League Review, July, 1938, p. 21.

passage, "He gave us the ministry of reconciliation," was misused by the pacifists because the reconciliation involved referred only to that between God and man and had nothing to do with the adjustment of political relations.¹

The case for the pacifist was argued by Herbert T. Weiskotten, whose general thesis was that war represented a denial of the teachings of Jesus. He admitted options were not open between absolutes and therefore a pacifist could accept the idea of police protection while rejecting war because the relative difference between the two was significant. Society could not be transformed, he contended, unless Christian people patterned their lives as closely as possible after the sermon on the mount. Weiskotten contended that at one time the church had sanctioned slavery on the authority of the apostle Paul, only to discover something higher in the gospel of Christ. Thus Paul and slavery were left behind. So also, he argued, the church would one day abandon Paul and Romans 13 on behalf of a new authority in the gospels for a higher life.² A few other writers also defended pacifism or made strong pleas on behalf of programs for peace.³

The most active man in the ranks of the ULCA on behalf of peace was O. Frederick Nolde, professor at the Lutheran Seminary in

¹T. A. Kantonen, "The Status of War in Christian Morality," Lutheran, December 3, 1941, p. 10; November 26, 1941, p. 10; November 19, 1941, p. 10; December 10, 1941, p. 8; and December 17, 1941, p. 10.

²Weiskotten, ibid., November 19, 1941, p. 11; November 26, 1941, p. 11; December 3, 1941, p. 11; December 10, 1941, p. 9; and December 17, 1941, p. 11.^d

³James E. Bristol, "The Declaration of a Conscientious Objector," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XV (January, 1942), pp. 75-77; and Donald Heiges, "The Ethic of Jesus and the Practice of War," ibid., XVII (April, 1944), pp. 125-139.

Philadelphia. In 1942 he published Christian World Action, a book designed for congregational study on the subject of war and peace. In it he identified what he called the root causes of war, ranging all the way from human selfishness to tariffs, and lack of access to raw materials to colonial possessions. Only by getting at the root causes could war be averted, he maintained. He argued that the church must extend its concern for peace beyond a desire for harmony between the individual and his God to a desire for peace on earth among the nations of the world. He claimed the church had the responsibility to educate its members for peace.¹ During the war years, Nolde frequently reported on the efforts of church groups, especially the Federal Council of Churches, to map strategy for peace, and gave strong support to their efforts.² As a participant in the mapping of ecumenical strategy for world peace, Dr. Nolde served as an important link in bringing ecumenical thinking on this topic to bear on the reflective processes of the ULCA.

Regardless of the verdict an individual may wish to make as to the wisdom of the various actions taken by the ULCA during this era in relation to the problem of war,³ one point is clear: the ULCA was not

¹Nolde, Christian World Action (Philadelphia, 1942), pp. 16-40.

²See for example, "The Church and World Peace," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XV (July, 1942), pp. 249-266; and "Through the Eyes of Trained Persons," Lutheran, April 8, 1942, pp. 12-13.

³For additional sources dealing with attitudes toward war and peace, see Herman Keiter, "The Church and the Pacifist," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XIII (July, 1940), pp. 244-252; "A Just and Durable Peace," Lutheran, April 15, 1942, p. 17; "Four Freedoms and Peace," ibid., January 28, 1942, pp. 18-19; "A Word of Warning," ibid., April 22, 1942, cover page; "A Christian Message to the World," ibid., August 18, 1943, pp. 12-13; John Foster Dulles, "Preliminary to Terms of Peace," ibid., June 23, 1943, p. 11; Summer Wells, "Second of Six," ibid., June 30, 1943, p. 11; Francis B. Sayre, "Six Pillars of Peace," ibid., July 7, 1943, p. 7; Joseph Ball, "The Enabling Power of Peace," ibid., July 14, 1943, p. 12; Thomas E. Dewey, "Peace Pillar Number Six," ibid., July 21, 1943, p. 14;

quietistic. She had entered the public arena to make her witness felt. Sometimes her testimony was directed to her members as individuals. At other times, she specifically sought to influence public action. In all instances, her witness was public for everyone to see and hear. Here was an ever increasingly strong voice attempting to form and mold the public conscience.¹ Her witness on the subject of war reflected the development of a broadening social consciousness.

Race Relations--Culturally Bound

In one area, namely that of race relations, the ULCA during this period under study had only begun to examine the moral implications involved in existing practices. She therefore did not take a front line position in this area.²

The Lutheran shifted its editorial emphasis from time to time. In a 1932 editorial discussing the alleged persecution of Jews in Germany, the Lutheran suggested that countries had discriminated against people throughout history, and pointed to the American attitude toward Negroes and Orientals as an example. The writer suggested that a minority

"Compulsory Military Training," Lutheran, November 29, 1944, p. 21; Oscar F. Blackwelder, "Washington," ibid., April 30, 1944, p. 8, and December 27, 1944, p. 12; Dwight F. Putman, "The Church and the Post-War World," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XVII (April, 1944), pp. 145-165; and Samuel S. Weyer, "How To Win the Peace," Social Missions Quarterly, December 15, 1943, p. 4.

¹Despite this witness and the trend it indicated, the ULCA still maintained a strong consciousness of the separation of church and state. As an expression of this consciousness, the 1940 convention voted to reject social security for lay workers in the church. Fear of governmental encroachment was one of the reasons cited for the action. See ULCA, Minutes (1940), pp. 59-60, 145, 349-351, and 369-379.

²For an example of some front line positions, see Carter, Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel, pp. 148ff. and 195ff.

had entered Germany illegally and now wielded undue influence. While he went on to say that wholesome discrimination against Jews as citizens was not justified, he nevertheless implied the possibility of such a justification.¹

In 1936, Editor Melhorn printed an article under his own by-line describing a trolley ride enroute to work through what he termed "the Black belt of Philadelphia." He said that the condition of the buildings suggested obvious poverty. Moreover, he confessed to being impressed by the "large numbers of colored people apparently unemployed and uninterested in employment . . ." as well as being depressed "by the seeming contentment of these people in this sub-normal condition." While he admitted that he had seen industrious Negroes in a Negro hospital, he nevertheless concluded: "From such data I come to the personal conclusion that any claim of racial equality in culture and ability can be substantiated only by obscuring the average situation."² Yet in the following year, the Lutheran published an editorial which admonished the white population to be sure laws did not unjustly discriminate against Negroes in such areas as educational opportunity, justice in the courts, and job possibilities.³

One condescending article in the Lutheran said:

If I were colored, of course, I should recognize my position and make the most of it. I would not be intrusive into white folks' society. I would serve in my place, always happy in the fact that I could do what others might consider small achievements. While in

¹See "The State, The Church, The Synagogue," Lutheran, June 8, 1933, p. 14. See also such editorials as "Tolerance With Understanding," ibid., October 13, 1937, p. 14; and "A Question of Ratios," ibid., February 16, 1938, p. 14.

²"Our Brother in Black," ibid., July 9, 1936, p. 11.

³"Race Relations," ibid., February 4, 1937, p. 14.

my place I would rejoice, remembering that it was a colored man who carried the Saviour's cross.

I would not allow myself to develop an inferiority complex. I would always feel that, though in a different sphere, I am just as important as my white neighbor. The sexton is just as important as the minister, each in his own place. In fact, I might be a better sexton than the minister a clergyman. While not haughty or lacking in humility, I would always carry my spirits high, remembering that I am a child of God, a part of His great plan, and important in the use and development of all the things He has made.¹

Other writers took more solid ground. As early as 1933, E. P.

Pfatteicher listed the status of Negroes as one of the greatest problems facing the nation.² A Lutheran Quarterly author contended that by saying in Christ there was neither Jew nor Greek, Paul was projecting a universalism that saw all men as a part of God's family.³ Support for this position was given by two men who wrote numerous columns for the auxiliaries of the church.⁴ The authority of the Madras conference was invoked to extend the call for equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, and for the church to end its own discrimination.⁵

A Negro layman from Harlem wrote in 1939 that the ULCA was not taking seriously its task of bringing the gospel to unchurched Negroes. A year later he leveled an attack against protestantism for the inconsistency of its concern for Niemoeller and the Christians in Russia while expressing an apparent indifference to the persecution and lynching of

¹C. P. Swank, "If I Were a Negro," Lutheran, April 20, 1933, p. 11.

²Christian Social Service, p. 75.

³P. P. Anspach, "The Race Problems in Paul's Epistles," Lutheran Church Quarterly, IX (January, 1936), pp. 439-49.

⁴See Arthur Getz, "The Topic for the Month," Lutheran Men, April, 1939, p. 16; ibid., January, 1940, p. 20; ibid., April, 1943, p. 18; and Amos J. Traver, "Spite Fences Out: Boulevards In," Lutheran, February 23, 1938, pp. 6-7.

⁵Paul Renz, "Race Equality," Luther League Review, March, 1944, p. 26.

the American Negro. He continued:

The ULCA cannot hide behind the principle that the time is not ripe for the Negro's absorption; nor can it wait patiently for him to come running to its bosom. . . . The Lutheran Church cannot have Negro followers until it has asserted itself in the Negro's interests.¹

An occasional voice was raised on behalf of the evacuated Japanese in World War II.² Concern for such questions in ULCA publications, however was rather limited.

Few actions were taken on the racial issue within the ULCA during the 1930's. At the 1936 ULCA convention, the delegates had received a memorial from the Georgia-Alabama Synod asking the ULCA to begin an adequate program for the preaching of the gospel to the Negroes in the south "with the ultimate object in view of establishing for them a Synod of Synods to be enrolled among the synods of The United Lutheran Church in America." The convention responded by accepting responsibility for such work but by eliminating the reference to a special synod for Negroes. Instead, the delegates voted to appoint a special commission to work out a program, subject to the approval of the ULCA Executive Board.³

When the Georgia-Alabama Synod met for its annual convention the following year, its president, C. A. Linn, reported that the commission's work was under way. A problem confronting the commission was described in this way:

¹Malcolm Aage Jackson, "A Negro Layman Looks at the U.L.C.A.," Lutheran, July 12, 1939, pp. 11 and 21; and "The Negro and the United Lutheran Church," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XIII (October, 1940), pp. 415-418.

²W. E. Crouses, "California and the Japanese," Lutheran, June 24, 1942, pp. 6ff.

³ULCA, Minutes (1936), pp. 358-360.

The most serious difficulty with which the Commission is confronted lies in the fact that on one hand, the Lutherans of the South consider it impossible to undertake Negro work on a permanent basis without contemplating the ultimate establishment of a separate Negro Synod; and, on the other hand, that, while Northern Lutherans want to be reasonable in dealing with the race situation in the South, many of them feel keenly that the organization of a separate Negro Synod would be too great a concession to what they regard as Southern prejudice. Our President is confident that the position taken by this Synod and by the Southern Church generally is not the result of prejudice, but of necessary compliance with social standards of the South which the Church is impotent to alter.¹

Upon the recommendation of President Linn, the convention voted to empower a commission to acquire a site for a school for Negroes and to begin Negro work "therewith."²

Plans for this work did not develop significantly during this period. At the 1938 ULCA convention, the special commission authorized two years earlier reported that lack of funds made it financially impossible to launch a new program, although interest was expressed in cooperating with Negro work done by the American Lutheran Church and the Synodical Conference.³ Consultations were undertaken with the ALC and in 1940 a report was submitted to the ULCA outlining a joint ALC-ULCA policy to govern Negro work. The policy said that

in this long-range program the goal shall be a self-governing, self-supporting, Afro-American Lutheran Church, with a competent and well-trained and adequately equipped colored ministry and diaconate, recruited from young Negroes who have enjoyed college and university training.⁴

The similarity of the text of this document and that adopted by the ALC

¹Georgia-Alabama Synod, Minutes (1937), pp. 12-13.

²Ibid., p. 23.

³ULCA, ibid. (1938), pp. 52-54.

⁴Ibid. (1940), pp. 64-66.

convention in 1938 suggests victory for the ALC point of view.¹ The ULCA approved the text after striking the words "self-supporting, Afro-American" and adding the words "among the negroes" after "Lutheran Church." The change in wording, however, did not alter the intent to move forward with Negro work in the context of segregation.² Minutes of the 1942 and 1944 conventions record annual contributions of from \$2,000 to \$3,000 to cooperative Negro work with the ALC.³

Two reactions are invited by these series of actions. In the first place, it is evident that the Lutherans were not going to take the lead in establishing a cultural break-through by integrating their work among the races. Despite their confessional aloofness from other religious groups toward the end that their doctrinal teachings might remain pure, despite their liturgical heritage which made them self-consciously a part of a Christian tradition that spanned oceans and international boundaries as well as the Mason-Dixon line, Lutherans were as much a part of the cultural bondage in America as the other churches. The church, President Linn of the Georgia-Alabama Synod had said, was "impotent to alter" the racial social structure and he seemed to accept the judgment as fact.

The other observation to be made is that a witness was born, although it did not bear immediate fruit. The refusal of the 1936

¹See *supra*, p. 109. However, this judgment cannot be pressed too far because the 1942 ULCA report on the ULCA-ALC cooperative venture said that "there was remarkable unanimity on the whole subject of work among negroes." ULCA, *Minutes* (1942), p. 175.

²*Ibid.* (1940), pp. 64-66 and 145.

³*Ibid.* (1942), pp. 175-176; and (1944), p. 155. It should also be noted that planned segregation was not limited to the South. Similar intentions were afoot in Michigan, for example. See Michigan Synod, *ibid.* (1944), p. 34; and (1945), p. 26.

ULCA convention to endorse segregated work alerted such communities to the unacceptableness of such a position. Had the ecclesiastical leaders, who were ultimately charged with the responsibility to formulate a program, reflected the same firmness as the 1936 convention, one can surmise that they might have been able to spare both the ULCA and the ALC a twenty-year experiment that finally ended in quiet embarrassment. Lack of funds, either as a real or camouflaged reason for inaction, seems to have spared the ULCA from launching a program which could have led to a situation nearly as difficult as that of the Methodist's Central Jurisdiction.

The only other significant action respecting this issue and taken by a ULCA convention during the 1930's occurred at the 1936 convention of the Susquehanna Synod. The report of the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare asserted that, inasmuch as the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man belonged together, "any distinction because of race or color is, therefore, unchristian and contrary to the spirit of Him who said, 'One is your master and all ye are brethren.'" ¹

During World War II and its social upheavals, ULCA members began expressing a slightly greater concern for colored minority groups. ² The Synod of California adopted a resolution in 1943 urging the churches to develop what was termed a Christian attitude toward the solution of the racial-minority problem in the area. The Kentucky-Tennessee Synod received a three-sentence report from its social missions committee that said, in part: "The race problem is one which is extremely delicate, yet it must be faced." No recommendations were made indicating how this

¹Susquehanna Synod, Minutes (1936), p. 97.

²See Minutes, Board of Social Missions, May 13, 1943, p. 15.

might be done, although suggestions were invited. The Mississippi Synod similarly received a two-sentence report in 1944 from its social missions committee saying that suggestions would be welcome outlining ways to erase racial prejudice.¹ The uneasy conscience was apparently stirring, albeit too weakly, to initiate significant action.

Two midwestern synods made brief expressions embodying racial concern which reflected the impact of World War II. In 1941, the Rocky Mountain Synod social missions committee protested radio broadcasts and news releases which stirred up racial or national hatreds. The Synod of the Northwest voted in 1940 to say that "inasmuch as God has made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth, we condemn every attempt to arouse in our land racial and religious hatred, and affirm anew our allegiance to our Lord's command that we love our neighbor as ourselves."²

In 1944, the New York Synod received a memorial from the New York Conference concerning the matter of race relations. The memorial appears to have been prepared by persons who foresaw the possibility of population shifts after World War II and who acted to preserve something of the status quo while making provisions for continued evangelism. The seven-point memorial was referred to the synodical executive committee.³ In 1945 that group reported that they had adopted the proposals that no congregation should make a radical change of policy until post-war trends

¹Evangelical Lutheran Synod of California, Minutes (1943), p. 37; Kentucky-Tennessee Synod, ibid. (1944), p. 41; and Mississippi Synod, ibid. (1944), p. 28.

²Rocky Mountain Synod, ibid. (1941), p. 22; and Northwest Synod, ibid. (1940), p. 58.

³New York Synod, ibid. (1944), p. 219.

became evident, that the synod adopt a long-range plan of evangelism among the colored citizens toward the end of establishing more colored churches in the city, and that the synod encourage qualified colored men to study for the ministry. The executive committee further reported that they had adopted as working principles the proposals that no church property be sold without the consent of synodical officials if such property could serve other sections of the community, that no church relocate without the permission of synodical officials, and that the synod aid the congregations in colored areas during the period of transition. The committee reported taking no action on the seventh petition, namely that the synod adopt some policy to reach and train leaders of future congregations, without upsetting regular congregational life.¹

In South Carolina one also finds evidence of new undercurrents concerning the races. The social missions committee was organized in that synod in 1940. The following year the committee went on record as "opposing race or class prejudice." In the three succeeding years, the conventions voted affirmations related to racial issues. In 1942, the delegates voted to reaffirm their previous year's position protesting prejudice. In 1943 the clergy were encouraged to examine their preaching to see if the gospel "in its fullness" was being preached, creating a respect for "personalities and the rights of peoples of other nations, races, and colors." In 1944, the social missions committee reported their involvement in a protestant bi-racial committee whose task it was to provide guidelines for children in the development of their attitudes

¹New York Synod, Minutes (1944), p. 219; and (1945), p. 220.

toward the races.¹

Concern for the vexing problem of race relations clearly did not proceed far during this period. For a minority, faith was being related to a concrete social problem which for decades had been considered the province of the state, but only a minority was involved.

The Interim Picture

One senses in the words and actions of the ULCA during this period a movement in the direction away from the traditional quietistic position. This body was giving her attention to questions such as war and economics which in former years had been considered the exclusive prerogatives of the state. She was considering such questions without abandoning her belief in the separation of church and state and without forfeiting her evangelistic concern for the conversion of the individual as the first step in the rehabilitation of society. She was consciously seeking to relate faith and life in such a way that her theology would influence social structures as well as individuals. Hers was a developing social consciousness.

Just how the relationship between faith and life, theology and social structures was to be understood was still often unclear and under study. This fact pointed to the need for a reappraisal of Lutheran ethics, a task which was to be given significant impetus after World War II.

One of the men who was to aid in the reformulation was Harold C. Letts, a Lutheran clergyman who had come under the influence of Reinhold Niebuhr. In an article entitled, "Toward a New Lutheran Ethic," written

¹South Carolina Synod, Minutes (1941), pp. 99, 102, and 105; (1942), p. 111; (1943), p. 91; and (1944), p. 84.

during the last year under study during this period, Letts outlined what he considered the weakness of the older position to have been and pointed to the new direction he thought Lutherans ought to take.

Letts saw the weakness of what he called orthodox Lutheranism to be due in part to a lack of emphasis on the law of love together with a fairly frequent endorsement of the status quo due to the acceptance of the divine ordinance of government. Moreover, he argued that Lutherans had found the ethic of the sermon on the mount to be too hard and had shifted instead to human reason as a guide to justice.¹

Consequently, in the reformulation of the Lutheran ethic, Letts wanted to give a greater place to the law of love. First, love should be emphasized as a law of judgment upon all of life, all political concepts, and all schemes of justice. Second, that law should be used to discriminate between different schemes of justice. Third, the law of love should be affirmed as the "source of, and inspiration for, higher and more imaginative schemes of justice," he wrote. Political responsibility, with all its compromises, had to be accepted, he said, and justification by faith made this possible. Too literal an understanding of Romans 13 was to be rejected to avoid the endorsement of tyranny, he continued. Faith and love had to be properly balanced so as not to rob love of its ethical vigor nor faith of its religious depth.² The outline was sketchy but it indicated a major direction in which the Lutheran church might go after World War II in its quest for a new ethic to satisfy the developing social consciousness.

¹"Toward a New Lutheran Ethic," Lutheran Church Quarterly, XVII (January, 1944), pp. 14-18.

²Ibid., pp. 19-27.

PART II

A DEVELOPING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MOVES

TOWARD MATURITY: 1945 - 1960

Introduction

After World War II, the United States found itself in a new position among the family of nations. She was now a world power and therefore also a world leader. The explosion of the atomic bomb had ushered in a new era. The years that followed were turbulent ones, despite a growing affluence, for the American citizen. World power structures were realigned and re-armed, communism mushroomed, and nationalism exploded among the nations of the world. On the domestic scene, the war was followed by an immediate outbreak of labor-management tensions, some sharp population shifts, and finally the inauguration of a revolution in race relations. Added to these were the technological developments involving communications, armaments, automation, and outer space. The whole series of developments combined to form a new world in which the American citizen had to live and seek adjustment. Many people found it to be a fearful and frustrating world. From it almost no one could flee into complete isolation. Modern communications allowed the complexities and frustrations of the new world to intrude into the living room of almost every American home. The possibility for innocence was thus reduced, if not almost entirely removed.

American Lutherans participated in this new era as they had never done with respect to previous ones. They were no longer isolated because

of language. Population shifts resulted in a reversal of the rural-to-urban ratio so that in the American, Augustana, and United Lutheran churches, the majority of members lived in urban areas. Only the Norwegian Lutheran Church, which reflected the disappearance of the language barrier in 1946 by changing its name to Evangelical Lutheran Church, maintained a predominantly rural constituency.¹ Even such a constituency, however, due to advances in travel and communications, was no longer isolated.

Moreover, the theological context in America had changed. The emphasis on man's sin and personal moral responsibility together with an emphasis on God's transcendence, judgment, and grace had become commonplace in American protestantism by the end of the war. Since Lutherans had steadfastly clung to these emphases during the social gospel era, they now felt fairly congenial toward contemporary theological develop-

¹A study published by the National Lutheran Council, based on the 1951 year books of the churches involved, showed that 72 per cent of the ULCA membership belonged to congregations located in population areas of 2,500 or more; 70 per cent of Augustana, 58 per cent of the American Lutheran Church, and 41 per cent of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. See "A Profile of the Lutheran Church in the United States," prepared by the NLC Division of American Missions, Chicago, 1954, p. 15a. (Mimeographed). In 1963 the Division distributed another profile in which it was said that "more than 55% of the total Lutheran baptized membership are located in standard metropolitan statistical areas." The percentage was highest for the Lutheran Church of America, formed through a merger of the ULCA and Augustana plus two smaller Lutheran groups. LCA percentage in such areas was 63. The American Lutheran Church percentage was said to be 38. That body was formed through a merger of the former ALC and ELC, plus two smaller Lutheran groups. See "American Missions Together," prepared by the NLC Division of American Missions, Chicago, June, 1963, p. 2. (Mimeographed). See also [Malmin], "We Are a Rural Church," Lutheran Herald, May 3, 1955, p. 430 in which the editor stated that "it is the proud boast of the Evangelical Lutheran Church that it is the most rural of all Lutheran Churches in America." According to Gibson Winter, 64 per cent of the American people lived in standard metropolitan areas in 1950. This would mean that the LCA population distribution was fairly close to the national average whereas the ALC was considerably more rural than average. See Winter, The Suburban Captivity of the Churches (Garden City, 1961), pp. 15 and 16.

ments. Textbooks written by American or European protestants were as likely to be read at a Lutheran seminary as at any other American protestant seminary. Lutherans could therefore become a part of the theological mainstream in America without feeling that they were compromising personal theological convictions by so doing. Thus they became more open to and active in the ecumenical movement with its articulate emphasis on social responsibility. The American Lutheran, Augustana, and United Lutheran churches joined the World Council of Churches at the organizational meeting in 1948 and the Evangelical Lutheran Church voted to apply for membership in 1956. Both Augustana and the ULCA joined the National Council of Churches when it was formed in 1950. The American Lutherans and the ELC participated in the work of some NCC committees and commissions.

Thus both the sociological and theological barriers which had separated Lutherans from other American protestants for generations were to a large extent gone in the post-war era. This had been largely true for the ULCA and somewhat true also for Augustana in the pre-war period. That trend, however, was now extended in the post-war era to include all the Lutheran bodies being studied.

Consequently, one of the significant findings during the period from 1945 to 1960 was the paucity of statements in all four bodies under study of the old defensive posture over against the rest of American protestantism. To be sure, such attitudes were expressed from time to time, but they usually were reflected by fringe groups.¹ On the one

¹The ELC found itself in the tightest tension during this era, as reflected by the debates concerning membership in the World Council of Churches. However, the growing edge is reflected by the fact that the ELC voted by more than a two-thirds majority to join the WCC in 1956 after having declined in 1948. The attitude of the fringe group is best illustrated by the occasional publication of The Word Alone, Inc.

hand, there was either silence, which suggests a quiet working out of a transition, or, on the other hand, a new positive participation in the main currents of American protestant life and thought.

The decline of classical orthodoxy and the rise of a less rigid theological position is of significance for a study of a developing social responsibility according to findings in a recent study by Gerhard Lenski. He wrote that "one of the most important findings . . . was the discovery of the irrelevance of doctrinal orthodoxy for most aspects of secular life." He said that what he termed "devotionalism" might "be capable of effecting changes in secular institutions whereas orthodoxy seems to lack any such inner dynamic."¹

In so far as the broadening and developing social responsibility among American Lutherans was concerned, it would have to be said that the ULCA and the Augustana Synod shared almost equally in this leadership. The ALC also reflected a significant development, whereas change in the ELC, the most rural of the four, was hardly noticeable. Among the qualities which set the work of the ULCA and Augustana off most significantly from the ALC was that the two former churches made greater efforts to construct a fresh theological context for their social ethic, either by trying to forge something new or by re-stating what they understood to be lost Reformation themes. The ALC operated from a narrower and more familiar theological base. In all three, especially in the ALC and the ULCA, significant influences from the social sciences must be noted.

Some assistance was given the churches during this period by the National Lutheran Council and the American Lutheran Conference. This was the case during the beginning of the period by the American Lutheran

¹The Religious Factor, (Garden City, 1961), p. 186.

Conference and the end of the period by the National Lutheran Council.

The American Lutheran Conference disbanded in 1954. While it functioned, however, it did serve as a forum to air views concerning social issues.¹ The ALC, and to some extent Augustana, drew on the work of the conference as will be shown later and were influenced by it. There is no evidence that the ELC was influenced by the conference in any manner so far as social responsibility is concerned.

In 1946, the conference adopted statements about movies, race relations, anti-semitism, the rural church, gambling, liquor, church and state, and marriage and divorce. Traditional concerns were merging with new ones. Essentially, the statement on race relations asked for sensitivity in personal relationships between whites and Negroes. The report charged that Negroes were "harmfully discriminated against in reference to training, employment, wages, medical care, housing, residential areas, recreation, rights and privileges of citizenship, . . . " Nevertheless, the commission called for integration only in such frontier areas as "church-supported schools and seminaries, hospitals and welfare institutions." No proposal was made that the places of work, worship, and habitat be integrated. Anti-semitism was rejected although Jews were to be evangelized, a statement said. Some effort was made to move away from old church-state patterns of relationships, although no sharp divergence was made from the past. The state was not granted autonomy before God but the church's function was still spoken of in other-worldly terms.²

¹See American Lutheran Conference, Convention Report (1954), pp. 47ff. for a brief history of the work of the Commission on Social Relations.

²Ibid., (1946), pp. 30-44 and 12-16. See also Minutes, Commission on Social Relations, American Lutheran Conference, April 10, 1945; and November 13-14, 1945.

Two years later, the Commission on Social Relations presented five proposals. A mild and revised statement calling for evangelization of the Jews and an end to anti-semitism was adopted as presented. A statement about family living did not fare so well. A part of the statement was "adopted in principle" but sections which said divorce might be a necessary alternative for some families, that couples should seek medical advice to achieve sexual adjustments, and that parents should plan for and could limit the number of children was sent back to the commission. Statements about "A Christian And His Political Duties," "The Church And The Economic Order," and "The Church And Modern Civilization," were adopted in principle. Later, the American Lutheran Church was to utilize this material, some of which had initially come from the ALC Ohio District.¹

The Commission on Social Relations, with Dr. Carl Reuss as one of its most persuasive members, did not leave matters resting. Four fairly non-controversial statements were adopted in 1950.² By 1952, however, the commission was back with another statement on planned parenthood that Reuss was carefully shepherding through both the conference and the American Lutheran Church.³ The report, which endorsed birth control "on the basis of competent medical advice and in a sense of accountability to God," was submitted to the member churches for evaluation with

¹American Lutheran Conference, Convention Report (1948), pp. 41-50. See also Minutes, Commission on Social Relations, American Lutheran Conference, November 12, 1947; and April 6, 1948.

²American Lutheran Conference, Convention Report (1950), pp. 31, 38-48, 10, and 12-13. See also Minutes, Commission on Social Relations, American Lutheran Conference, April 27, 1949; November 11, 1949; and May 5, 1950.

³Infra, p. 266.

the invitation to submit criticisms back to the social relations commission.¹ The revised statement was back on the 1954 agenda, though no convention action is recorded.² The work, which was essentially that of Reuss, was used in both the ALC and Augustana.³

Other action of the American Lutheran Conference was utilized by the ALC and Augustana as the subsequent history will show. In addition, influence within those two churches was exerted by authors in the beleaguered Lutheran Outlook, which ran scores of articles on social issues before it too, died in 1953.⁴ In this manner, the American Lutheran Conference did serve as a catalyst for a developing sense of social responsibility in two churches within American Lutheranism.

The National Lutheran Council had killed its Committee on Social Trends at the beginning of World War II and had given its support to a Division of Welfare. Hence the council had no established bureau in which social action concerns could be given primary attention. Efforts were made more than once to get a paid executive for social action. Each time the proposal was thwarted, at first by opposition within the council from the less socially active churches, and finally by opposition from the ULCA. The latter church opposed the move not because of disinterest in this area, but because its own Board of Social Missions believed social

¹American Lutheran Conference, Convention Report (1952), pp. 29-32. Two other reports were also submitted that year dealing with mass media of communications and with children. See ibid., pp. 26-29. See also Minutes, Commission on Social Relations, American Lutheran Conference, April 29, 1952.

²American Lutheran Conference, Convention Report (1954), pp. 50-51. See also Minutes, Commission on Social Relations, American Lutheran Conference, October 26, 1953; and April 27, 1954.

³Infra, pp. 266ff. and 239ff.

⁴For a listing of these articles, see the bibliography.

action was best promoted through the individual churches.¹

The Committee on Social Trends was re-activated within the welfare division at the beginning of this period being studied. In 1947, the division proposed that a consultant be added to its staff to study and coordinate the resolutions of the various churches and the American Lutheran Conference, to conduct institutes for laymen and clergymen, to organize demonstration projects in areas of need, and to provide information and education to the churches concerning social issues. That consultant should be added, the division said, only after an additional field worker for welfare services and a consultant in hospital administration had been added to the welfare staff. Welfare clearly had priority over social action at this time.²

After that flurry of activity in the late 40's, concern in the NLC for social action remained rather dormant until the mid 50's.³ The Division of Public Relations reported results of a survey conducted among NLC clergy to determine the degree of participation in government by

¹See for example, Minutes, Division of Welfare, NLC, June 15, 1945, p. 3; *ibid.*, January 21, 1946, pp. 1-2; Minutes, Executive Committee, NLC, January 23, 1945, p. 1; *ibid.*, March 23, 1946, p. 5; *ibid.*, May 11, 1946, p. 9; Agenda, NLC, January 22-25, 1946, p. 23; Minutes, NLC, January 22-25, 1946, pp. 35-37; Minutes, Division of Welfare, NLC, April 25, 1946, p. 3; Minutes, NLC, January 21-24, 1947, pp. 22-23; and Minutes, Board of Social Missions, ULCA, November 9-10, 1955, p. 38. With respect to the ULCA argument, it should be noted that each church did have welfare and home mission departments and programs even though the NLC also had divisions devoted to these areas. See also Minutes, Executive Committee, NLC, November 15-17, 1955, p. 39.

²See Minutes, Committee on Social Trends, NLC, September 17, 1945; and *ibid.*, January 7, 1946. See also Minutes, NLC, January 21-24, 1947, p. 23.

³See Minutes, Division of Welfare, NLC, September 28, 1948, p. 3; *ibid.*, March 28, 1950, p. 4; *ibid.*, March 14, 1951, p. 3; *ibid.*, September 18, 1951, p. 3; and *ibid.*, March 26, 1952, p. 6. See also Minutes, Committee on Social Trends, NLC, November 13, 1947; *ibid.*, September 18, 1950; *ibid.*, March 12, 1951; and *ibid.*, September 16, 1951.

Lutherans at the local, state, and national levels. The survey was not a controlled one, but it showed that the ALC had the highest percentage of officers at the county level, Augustana at the state level, and the ULCA at the national level. The public relations statement also said:

The Church has a responsibility to serve as the conscience of the state. In contrast to the clamor of self-seeking groups, its voice needs to be raised on behalf of human welfare. When issues are pending which involve moral principles, silence on the part of the Church is itself a negative witness.

The Church can influence government policies mainly through the power of ideas. The moral authority of the Church comes, not from pressure which it may try to exert, but from the validity of the ideas which it voices. To be most effective, these ideas should be expressed to those who are responsible for the formulation of policy at a time when decisions are in the making.

If it is to receive serious consideration by the government, the witness of the Church must be both logically valid and pointedly relevant to the issues involved.¹

The growing edge of the Lutheran Church was being less hesitant to address the state about issues at hand. The difference between this understanding of the function of the church and that expressed by the American Lutheran Conference is marked.² In 1948, the NLC had voted to establish a Washington secretary for the Division of Public Relations to maintain effective channels of contact with the executive agencies of the government, to keep the NLC informed concerning pending legislation, to represent the NLC before Congressional committees, and to keep the government informed concerning programs of the church.³ The Rev. Robert E. Van Deusen was named to the post.

Acting upon recommendations from different committees within its structure, the NLC in the early 50's commended both the United States and

¹Agenda, NLC, January 31-February 3, 1950, pp. 180-181.

²See American Lutheran Conference, Convention Report (1946), pp. 40-42.

³Agenda, NLC, January 27-30, 1948, p. 39; and Minutes, NLC, January 27-30, 1948, p. 29.

the United Nations for their studies of means to prevent genocide, supported the United Nations in its efforts on behalf of human rights and the plight of the refugees, and expressed appreciation for the United States Point Four program.¹

At the 1953 annual meeting of the NLC, the Division of Welfare proposed that the council

confirm the authority of the Division through its Committee on Social Trends to prepare, in co-operation with the respective boards and commissions, and for the study and guidance of member churches, summary statements representing a Lutheran Christian expression on major national and international social issues and trends.

The battle within the Division of Welfare to give the social trends committee both status and authority had been led chiefly by Dr. Carl Reuss of the ALC. It was he who was now asked by the council to defend the request. After discussion and amendment, the council voted to authorize the preparation of such statements for study by member churches, but dropped the word "guidance." With that decision out of the way, the council voted to approve a statement opposing the publication of names of persons on welfare rolls, to ask the United States government to revise its immigration laws, and to ask President Eisenhower not to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican. Interest in the revision of the national origins system continued to be an interest of the NLC throughout this period, as was the United Nations technical assistance program.²

¹Minutes, NLC, January 31-February 3, 1950, p. 29; and *ibid.*, January 30-February 2, 1951, p. 43. See also Agenda, NLC, February 3-6, 1953, p. 123.

²Minutes, Division of Welfare, NLC, September 16, 1952, Exhibit B and p. 5; Agenda, NLC, February 3-6, 1953, pp. 161-163; Minutes, NLC, February 3-6, 1953, pp. 21-23, 25-26, and 38; Minutes, Division of Welfare, NLC, March 23, 1953, p. 3; *ibid.*, September 21-22, 1954, p. 6; Agenda, NLC, February 1-4, 1955, p. 153; and Minutes, *ibid.*, pp. 10, 31, and 24.

Despite what appears to have been a decision to give the social trends group a new lease on life, the opposite occurred. Membership on the committee dropped to three. In 1957, however, Dr. Paul Empie, executive secretary of the NLC, acted to bring the committee to life. At a meeting in New York late that year, Dr. Empie reviewed the history of the committee, and, while pointing to the commitments of the NLC to the committee, concluded that "not very much has been accomplished in this field." Empie pointed out that virtually all statements adopted by the NLC had by-passed the Committee on Social Trends. He said the inability of the NLC to utilize its structural possibilities to speak out on live, contemporary issues was "frustrating," and gave strong endorsement to a new surge of social action activity.¹

As this era ended, position papers had either been adopted or were in the process of being studied in the following areas: race relations, education, economics, entertainment, church and state, and immigration.² A few of these statements were used by member churches, as will be noted later, or were adopted by the NLC in the 1960's. Despite the enormous effort put forth by the social trends committee and members of the NLC staff from 1958 through 1960, one has to conclude that the NLC, viewed for this entire period under study, made only a moderate contribution toward a broadening social responsibility among Lutherans. Perhaps this judgment is best illustrated by the fate of a position paper entitled, "Religious Faith as a Factor in American Elections." Drafted

¹Agenda, Committee on Social Trends, October 22, 1957, pp. 1-5.

²See Agenda and Minutes, Committee on Social Trends, NLC, December 18-19, 1957; June 30-July 2, 1958; December 18-20, 1958; June 29-30, 1959; December 17-19, 1959; April 13-14, 1960; and November 4-5, 1960.

by the social trends committee in June, 1959, the statement was postponed for release by the NLC until 1961 and then revised. By that time the issue had been settled by popular referendum.¹

¹See Agenda, Committee on Social Trends, NLC, June 29-30, 1959, p. 4; Minutes, ibid., p. 2 and Exhibit A; Agenda, ibid., December 17-19, 1959, p. 2; Minutes, ibid., p. 9; Agenda, ibid., April 13-14, 1960, p. 3; Minutes, Executive Committee, NLC, November 18-19, 1959, p. 47; Minutes, NLC, February 2-4, 1960, pp. 12-13; and ibid., January 31-February 3, 1961, pp. 11 and 48-49.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

It has already been observed that little change occurred in the Evangelical Lutheran Church during this period with regard to a developing social responsibility. There appear to have been three primary reasons for this situation.

The first reason was sociological. The ELC remained predominantly rural during this era¹ and therefore did not sharply confront the kind of tensions which were most acute in urban areas.

The second reason was theological. The impact of European and American protestant theology filtered into the ELC shortly after World War II when changes in faculties at Luther Seminary in St. Paul and the various ELC colleges began to take place. Tensions arose concerning the nature of the Bible and the propriety of discourse with contemporary protestants. The ULCA and Augustana had responded and adjusted fairly well to these new influences prior to World War II and therefore found the battle with the fundamentalists and the ultra-confessionalists to be chiefly side line matters during this period. The ELC, by way of contrast, found itself sufficiently involved with the questions of Biblical criticism and confessional authority so that questions relating to social ethics got crowded off the agenda. An examination of the Luther Theological Seminary Catalog shows that ethics

¹See supra, p. 207.

did not occupy a conspicuous place in the curriculum of this institution during this era. Nor were there any faculty trained in the field. In other words, the battles in the ELC during this period were being fought about issues other than social action.

The third factor was ecclesiastical. During almost the entire period, the ELC was involved in negotiations which resulted in the formation of The American Lutheran Church in January, 1961. She was also involved in an intense debate about membership in the World Council of Churches. The other three churches under study confronted ecumenical questions also but they managed to settle such questions comparatively quickly. The other three groups were also involved with equal seriousness in the question of Lutheran mergers. It appears, however, that while the other three churches were occupied with this question, the ELC was preoccupied with it, together with the question of extra-Lutheran relations.

So far as the ELC was concerned, therefore, the sociological factor received little forthright and articulate attention, except perhaps by the planners of home mission strategy. The theological factor was submerged as much as possible from public convention action and from scrutiny in the church press as an examination of convention minutes and the pages of the Lutheran Herald reveals. The ecclesiastical factor, on the other hand, dominated and overwhelmed to the point of preoccupation. In such a context, the prospect for the development of a broadening social responsibility remained rather dormant.

Only a few formal acts were taken concerning social issues. In 1946, the ELC Church Council adopted a resolution which said in part that "we deeply deplore all race and class prejudices among us" and

expressed concern for world peace, which, the resolution said, would come only as the result of preaching of law and gospel.¹ Six years later, the biennial convention received and adopted a vague memorial from the Southern Minnesota District. For example, the resolution affirmed "that as Christians it is our social responsibility to endeavor to unify, direct and support such principles of Government and society as are necessary to the establishment of a social order which is conducive to the daily living of a Christ-centered life."²

In 1954, the ELC elected a new president, Fredrik A. Schiotz. He had worked with the American Lutheran Conference student program and the National Lutheran Council Commission on Younger Churches and Orphaned Missions, as well as with the Lutheran World Federation Department of World Missions. These activities had given him an ecumenical and social perspective in advance of the average ELC clergyman.³

¹ELC, Report (1946), p. 39.

²The clarifying section which was attached to suggest what the initial statement meant merely said that "these objectives" might be attained by stimulating a consciousness of the fact that man was his brother's keeper, by exalting and defending "those very principles which have come to us from Christ himself," by speaking out forcefully against "such forces as are morally destructive to human life," by voting for candidates who would "support such laws as will promote social ideals acceptable to the Church," and by encouraging the individual layman to "exert his Christian influence among his fellowmen by wholesome and winsome expression of his Christian faith." The report ended by saying that "in the final analysis, we are convinced that the Christian Gospel offers the only workable, satisfactory and permanent basis for the solution of the world's ills." Ibid. (1952), pp. 35-36.

³Despite the leadership he gave some areas of social responsibility, however, Dr. Schiotz did not open all doors. For example, during the 1960 campaign, four professors at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul joined with a few other Lutheran theologians to endorse Senator Kennedy for President. Because of the religious issue in the campaign, the story of their endorsement was picked up by the Associated Press. Dr. Schiotz, together with Dr. Malvin Lundeen, president of the Augustana Lutheran Church, issued a sharp public rebuke to the men involved. In a statement released to the press, Schiotz and Lundeen said

In his first formal report to the 1956 convention, Dr. Schiotz hailed the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in the public schools. He decried the effort of citizens' councils to boycott goods sold by firms reputedly friendly to Negro laborers. Moreover, he called attention to a report from the Institute on Indian Affairs at the University of Montana which had said that churches were discriminating against the Indian.¹

The report is different in that it centered the attention of the delegates on one of the crucial social issues of the day. It should be noted, however, that its chief appeal focused on the value of the Supreme Court's decision for the world mission programs of the church rather than on the intrinsic justice of the decision.² The convention responded by incorporating into its minutes a resolution adopted by the Church Council which read as follows:

that "neither our Churches nor our theological seminaries endorse political candidates, whatever the party. While we defend the right of an individual to speak his mind, we strongly deplore individuals allowing the name Lutheran to be identified with a political endorsement." They went on to say that "this issue raises the whole question of the propriety of any pastor, theological professor, or church official endorsing a political candidate, no matter what party the candidate may represent. To do this is to risk the forfeiture of the confidence so necessary for the primary work of the pastor; namely, the proclamation of the Gospel. It is impossible for a pastor, theological professor, or church official to disassociate himself from the office as an anonymous John Doe. The public will tend to identify this political endorsement with the Church which he serves." They therefore concluded that "a pastor's concern for righteousness in the community may be better exercised by speaking out on questions of human rights and on moral and ethical issues; but leave it to the voter to decide which candidate will best serve the nation, state, or community." See F. A. Schiotz, "A Statement from the President," Lutheran Herald, November 22, 1960, p. 10.

¹ELC, Report (1956), p. 15.

²In appealing to this more narrow base, Dr. Schiotz was not giving adequate breadth to his own previously expressed views against racial injustice. It could be conjectured that he placed his remarks in this context because he assumed his personal views were well known or

WHEREAS, The plain message of the Gospel is that Christ is the Redeemer of all peoples everywhere, and God does not in any measure distinguish between persons, and that in Christ the Christian is brother to every man;

BE IT RESOLVED, That we humbly deplore our frequent failure to exemplify Christ as we ought in human relationships, and urge every member of our Church to continually examine his daily human contacts in the Light of God's Word and pray His Spirit to use us more effectively to show that all men of all races and backgrounds are one family in His love.¹

History will likely show the incompleteness of such a witness in view of the magnitude of the moral dilemma.²

Also in 1956, the ELC national convention adopted a resolution proposed by the National Lutheran Council which said that American votes in the United Nations had created confusion abroad concerning the United States attitude toward colonialism. This confusion in turn was said to be affecting mission work adversely. Hence individual church members were exhorted to express their support to proper government officials for what was suggested had historically been an American position of anti-colonialism.³ Once again, however, the appeal concerned the impact on missions rather than the central justice of such a position.

Another National Lutheran Council statement was affirmed by the ELC at its 1958 convention. Entitled, "A Christian Affirmation on

because he believed that such a context was more likely to catch the attention and approval of the average ELC delegate. For a broader base concerning his view on this subject, see his article entitled, "Race Prejudice," Lutheran Outlook, VIII (October, 1943), p. 233.

¹ELC, Report (1956), p. 521.

²The Northern Minnesota and North Dakota districts reflected concern by acting to evangelize the Mexican migrants in the Red River Valley but no action was taken concerning wages or other aspects of the migrants' treatment. Similar action was initiated concerning the Indian. See ibid., p. 547; and (1957), pp. 360, 430, and 432.

³Ibid. (1956), pp. 37 and 504.

Human Relations," the statement had been adopted by the NLC earlier that year. The affirmation said that "God created one human family and that all men everywhere, whatever their color, culture, class or caste, are inseparably related and bound together as members of that one human family." The statement went on to say that all men were created in the image of God and that Christ was the Saviour and Lord of all men, "whatever their color, culture, class, or caste." It was "the obligation of the Church everywhere to communicate the Gospel without discrimination or distinction," the report continued, and that "to exclude from worship or membership in the local congregation any person on the basis of color, culture, class or caste is to sin against God and man." The will of God, not social economic or cultural patterns, ought to be the decisive factor in the shaping of local congregational policies, it was said.

After declaring an open door policy toward all races so far as congregational membership was concerned, the resolution went on to say that

Christians ought to exercise their social responsibility by acting in their own communities to remove whatever injustices exist and to insure for all persons without discrimination, just and equal opportunities, especially in housing, employment, education and access to social welfare services.¹

This statement represented an advance over the brief paragraphs adopted two years previously. It should be noted, however, that the statement did not explicitly endorse the Supreme Court decision, even though four years had already elapsed since that historic moment. In terms of sensitivity to the racial issue, the court had preceded the

¹ELC, Report (1958), pp. 25 and 473.

church and prodded it into action.

The Lutheran Herald reflected somewhat the new concern for Negroes which had been stimulated in churches by the court decision. Writing about the observance of "Race Relations Sunday" in 1956, Dr. Malmin admitted:

We have not as a rule made much of "Race Relations Sunday" in The Evangelical Lutheran Church. The reason is obvious; it has been pretty much an academic question among us, this whole business about racial "minorities." There just haven't been any in most of the places where we do our work. But not any longer! Change is upon us, and "Race Relations Sunday" will be important from now on.¹

Dr. Malmin wrote about a church where a white person, an Indian, and a Negro had kneeled side by side one Sunday for holy communion. "The solution of the 'racial problem,' if problem it is," Malmin continued, "is symbolized by that group of communicants. If we can kneel together, we can live together. Until we can learn to kneel together, we shall never learn to live together. It is as simple as that." He then went on to deplore the fact that the church was the most segregated American institution and said that of all institutions, the church should be the last to divide on the basis of race, because at the cross, all men were equal.²

Besides expressing an awakened concern for this issue, the editorial reflected two things. First, the population shift which involved Negroes as well as whites was an important catalyst for the development of this concern, in addition to the court decision. Second, the presupposition was made that evangelism of all the races would result

¹"Level at the Cross," Lutheran Herald, February 14, 1956, p. 184.

²Ibid.

in social justice.

When Negroes began their bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, one of the men to join them was a young ALC clergyman named Robert S. Graetz. The subsequent bombing of his home seems to have aroused the Lutheran Herald further. Malmin wrote that the integrity of the gospel in reaching out to all people was involved. He said that for most members of the ELC, the question of racial equality would likely be theoretical, inasmuch as the church was northern and rural. He spoke of the need to overcome what he termed the "segregation of the heart."¹ His appeal continued to center on open evangelism rather than on community justice.

After the explosion at Little Rock in 1957, ELC President Schiotz wrote that "it may be necessary for the ELC to adopt a general convention resolution that will make it clear that we stand on Biblical ground also in this issue" in protesting segregation. He said that as a matter of ELC policy, all congregations receiving Home Mission subsidies had to sign a contract that they would serve their community "regardless of race, economic standing, religious background or other circumstances, . . ."²

Late in 1958, Lutheran Herald printed a partial defense of segregation written by the Rev. R. L. Otterstad of Waco, Texas. He said the southern white was concerned about the matter of state's rights, school integration, and what was described as a superior moral character of the white man over against the Negro. The Negro, Otterstad maintained,

¹"The Church's Integrity Is Involved," Lutheran Herald, January 29, 1957, p. 113.

²"Regardless of Race," ibid., October 22, 1957, p. 1009. The following year the ELC adopted the NLC's "A Christian Affirmation on Human Relations," see supra, p. 222.

was "not quite so meticulous in his moral relationships as the average white Southerner." Otterstad further wrote that since Negro teachers failed to meet the standards of white schools, integration would cost Texas a loss of 20 per cent of its teaching staff, since the latter percentage were Negro and could not qualify. Desegregation was coming, the pastor wrote, but suggested that neither white nor Negro wanted forced integration.¹

In replying to the Waco pastor, Dr. Malmin argued that Otterstad had built his defense upon a framework of economic, social, and cultural conditions and not the will of God as revealed in Christ. Malmin contended that the ELC also had as yet failed to face up to the problem, which, he said, would get worse before it got better. He continued:

The truth is quite obvious that we can no longer evade the fundamental issue. Scripture has laid down a certain principle which is not amenable to modification on the grounds of social, economic, or cultural considerations. . . . "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."²

This equality was true for the individual as well as for the community and church, Malmin wrote, as he now broadened his articulated concern beyond the realm of evangelism and ecclesiastical policy to that of community justice.

Hardly any reaction to Otterstad's article came to the editor's desk, Dr. Malmin reported. In fact, the total reaction comprised two articles and two letters. Malmin therefore wrote:

Why bring the matter up now? The answer to that is that the complete indifference with which this material was received in

¹"Time for Understanding," Lutheran Herald, September 9, 1958, pp. 6-7 and 15.

²"Segregation--Integration--Desegregation," ibid., / September 9, 1958, pp. 14-15.

our Church is one of the most ominous things we have run across. . . .

However, we cannot but wonder what can possibly awaken us to one of the most critical spiritual problems of our day.¹

The two articles to which Malmin referred came from Dr. T. F. Gullixson, president emeritus of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, and the Rev. Alf M. Kraabel, secretary for inter-cultural outreach of the National Lutheran Council. Dr. Gullixson maintained the position that God had made all men on earth of one blood.² Over against Pastor Otterstad, who had pleaded for understanding of the segregationist position, Rev. Kraabel argued that "there is a need for more than understanding. There is need for greatness." Kraabel contended that if a person thought the Negro's moral standards lower than his own, he ought to invite the Negro to worship with him. He went on to say that 70 to 90 per cent of the Negroes had white genes in them, a situation not attributable exclusively to Negroes. Moreover he argued that second-class citizenship, to which the Negro had been relegated, tended to lower moral standards. Kraabel then proceeded to defend the Negro's right to equality and said:

This is a time for greatness. A time for the Church once again to put on the prophet's mantle and, speaking the truth in love, proclaim and declare the will and way of God. There is a voice yet to be heard clearly and fearlessly here in our land. The Negro people have such a voice in Martin Luther King. His insistence on non-violent resistance to segregation is one of the great voices to be heard among us these days. There is yet to be heard the strong, prophetic voice of the Church, calling upon men to heed the Word of God, to be done with prejudice, bitterness, hate, and revenge.

Our statesmanship is under severe trial, our defense of the American way of life is under attack. But even more so, the very

¹[Malmin], "With a Dull Thud," Lutheran Herald, October 21, 1958, p. 15.

²"How Much Time for Understanding?", ibid., January 13, 1959, pp. 7-9.

integrity of the Church of Jesus Christ is in jeopardy. It is His Church, and it has His blessing so long as it walks humbly, sincerely, and honestly in the truth as He has given it to us.¹

There were some additional expressions in the ELC publications regarding the race issue. The pages of the Lutheran Herald were opened to Martin Luther King and to Liston Pope, for example, as a last minute effort was made to arouse the conscience of the church to the problem at hand.²

One of the few items on the subject of race relations to be written by a member of the ELC was a pamphlet by Pastor Kraabel entitled, Grace and Race in the Lutheran Church. It was prepared in connection with his work in the field of inter-cultural outreach for the National Lutheran Council. In the pamphlet, Kraabel argued for what he termed "a non-segregated, all-inclusive, inter-cultural and interracial Church," such as the one at Pentecost. God had both created and redeemed all men, he said, and had summoned them to be together. While he would not read a segregationist out of the church, Kraabel argued that no church which rested on grace could be exclusivistic on racial grounds.³ Both science and Scripture supported the unity of the human race, he contended.

There are, for instance, no racial blood types. . . . The blood of a Negro is no different from the blood of a Jew. The blood of an Oriental is no different from the blood of an Eskimo. . . . A pint of blood taken from a Negro could very well save the life,

¹Kraabel, "Time for Greatness," Lutheran Herald, October 21, 1958, pp. 12-13.

²See for example, M. L. King, "Out of the Long Night," ibid., February 4, 1958, pp. 4-5; and Liston Pope, "Created in His Image," ibid., February 9, 1960, pp. 3-5. See also Joel Dobbe, "A Dirty Back Yard," ibid., March 5, 1957, pp. 229 and 241; [Malmin], "The Virtue of Staying Put," ibid., March 5, 1957, pp. 230-231; [Malmin], "Love the Negro," ibid., July 22, 1958, pp. 3-5; and [Malmin], "Churches Are Welcoming the Migrants," ibid., April 7, 1959, pp. 3-4 and 14.

³Grace and Race in the Lutheran Church, (Chicago, 1957), pp. 7, 9, 11ff., and 23ff.

even of the most rabid supporter of complete segregation. A cornea transplanted from the eye of a Jew could readily give sight to a determined anti-semitist. A bone graft involving an African and a native Hollander would be effective.¹

The hour was late--too late. Dr. Malmin contended that the ELC grass roots were indifferent.

Other topics also were discussed briefly in the Herald. The war, especially the developments for the Church of Norway, had left an impact upon the leaders of the ELC. Dr. Malmin reflected this impact in the judgments he expressed editorially. Reporting on a lecture given in Sweden by Norwegian Historian Einar Molland, Malmin quoted the historian as saying:

"Viewed with a historical and ecumenical perspective, the Norwegian church struggle is interesting because here we see an example of a Lutheran Church in serious conflict with the State over the issue of justice and jurisprudence. Considered on the background of Lutheran tradition, this is really remarkable. The Lutheran Churches have seldom distinguished themselves by any passion for social pronouncements, but rather by a pronounced subservience to the State. Romans 13 has been the favorite socio-ethical passage, especially for German Lutherans, and the Lutheran tradition has been all too ready to esteem those who are in authority at the moment as the properly constituted government, without inquiring about law and justice."²

The fresh insight, forged in the concentration camp and beamed to the world from Scandinavia, was reported often to ELC readers. Bishops from the five Scandinavian countries had met in August of 1945 to issue a statement which said in part:

"The responsibility of the Church toward improved social and international relations should impel the Churches to arrive at a definite world fellowship of sustaining Christian principles for

¹Kraabel, Grace and Race in the Lutheran Church, p. 17.

²Quoted in "Strengthened as by Fire," Lutheran Herald, August 28, 1945, pp. 599-601.

the governing of society's life, and at practical ways and means for applying these principles in actual daily life."¹

Commenting in 1946 on a statement of Bishop Berggrav, Malmin wrote:

In Lutheran tradition there is a double line derived from two scripture passages: Obey all earthly authority, and Obey God rather than men. In the Lutheran State Churches there has been, from the time of autocratic monarchy in the seventeenth century, a tendency to underline the first word and rather to neglect the other. The Lutheran view has frequently been accused of producing servility in relation to the State and towards the shifting powers that be. That this is not genuine Lutheranism is proved by Luther's own personal attitude during the creative years of the Reformation.²

Malmin then proceeded to apply this insight to the American scene. He wrote:

Must it not be admitted that one of the cardinal sins of Lutheranism, as it has developed on American soil, has been that it has been too separated from the daily affairs of life? Have we not been far too complacent in our conviction that "we have the truth" and that that truth, will by some mysterious method quite apart from our personal effort, effect that change in society which we all know should be effected?³

It was an accurate diagnosis, one which Malmin had made on previous occasions.⁴ But he was one of the few people in the ELC to reflect in print this change of view.⁵ These new concerns, however, were soon to be nearly smothered by considerations of Lutheran unity. When the Lutheran

¹Quoted in Herman E. Jorgenson, "Statement by Bishops of the North," Lutheran Herald, September 18, 1945, pp. 670-671.

²"Bishop Berggrav Sums Up," ibid., October 15, 1946, pp. 907-909.

³Ibid., pp. 908-909. For a comprehensive statement of Berggrav's views, see his book, Man and State, trans. George Aus (Philadelphia, 1951).

⁴See for example, "The Church and the Charter," Lutheran Herald, July 24, 1945, p. 531.

⁵See for example, Gabriel Tweet, "The Social Teachings of the Church," ibid., October 1, 1946, pp. 878-879. The views expressed in this article approximate those expressed in the ALC, Augustana, and the ULCA ten years earlier.

merger proposals were put forward, Dr. Malmin was ultimately appointed a member of the negotiating committee which consumed not only enormous quantities of his time and energy, but the bulk of his interest as well. Consequently, merger considerations tended to move this new social insight into the background.

The most elaborate treatment of an issue relating to social ethics attempted by anyone within the ELC was that done by Dr. Howard Hong, professor of philosophy at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.¹ Dr. Hong sought to picture the context in which modern man lived, especially with respect to his work, and sought to state some ideas designed to help lead man out of his dilemma. Dr. Hong, in describing the meaninglessness of work current in this world, wrote:

. . . we have a diseased view of work based on a secular view of reality and of man's nature, evidencing itself in a practical debasement of man to an economic, technical function, and leaving most men to a savorless, dehydrating, meaningless routine which tends to incapacitate him for growing in ethical, spiritual consciousness, in that which is uniquely human.²

Dr. Hong then proceeded to argue that "the positive thesis of this study is that the problem of man's time, of his work, can be solved only by an active recovery of the Reformation view of vocation." This was quickly qualified to mean Luther's view of vocation, since Calvin had merely sanctified secular labor as "a religious activity" and glorified "the active economic virtues needed by the developing economic and

¹Also during this period, a book entitled God and Caesar was edited by Dr. Warren Quanbeck, professor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. However, since none of the essays in the book were written by ELC personnel and since its publication grew out of a Lutheran social ethics seminar at Valparaiso University (Missouri Synod), its publication cannot be viewed as an ELC venture.

²This World and The Church (Minneapolis, 1955), p. 64.

mechanical-industrial view of life, . . ."¹ Hong suggested.

Luther, Hong maintained, in rejecting monasticism, had embraced all work, muscular and intellectual, as legitimate. The result had been "the erasing of the small circles of monastic orders and of other kinds of special religious life and the inscribing of a large circle which sweeps all work into the religious life and erases the word 'secular.'"² One should note, Hong maintained, that Luther added the phrase, "if done in faith." He continued:

Vocation then to Luther means "calling" in a double sense or in a single sense together with its corollary. A man's vocation begins with his call from God to enter fellowship with Him. Vocation is a personal relationship between an individual and God, initiated by God. The heart of this relationship is forgiveness of sins. God's call is God's gift to a man. God does not call us to be accountants, professors, horse trainers, or farm boys, but he does call horse trainers and professors, accountants and farm boys, to the truly human life, a life of forgiveness and abiding grace hidden in Him.³

Having been called by God to a life of forgiveness, Hong continued, man was to remain in his profession, to work out his salvation among men in service to his neighbor. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, Hong maintained, meant that

we all are to become members of the tertiary monastic order with the world as the monastery. The neighborly relationships of all kinds, whether we are governors or bootblacks, are the context in which our divine calling becomes the motivation for our use of time and natural gifts.⁴

Hence Hong saw Luther's doctrine of vocation as "a theology of God's love and an ethics of men's responsive love among men, . . ." Viewed

¹This World and The Church, p. 75.

²Ibid., p. 77.

³Ibid., pp. 78-79.

⁴Ibid., p. 80.

"Christianly," Hong asserted, "ethics as the active life of works is no longer an ought; it is automatic."¹

The effort to assert what Hong described as Luther's doctrine of vocation appears to encounter difficulty in the age of automation. This seems to be the case for four reasons. In the first place, Hong's view is likely ineffective as moral education in that it is doubtful such a view will bring about the desired change in a man's attitude toward his work.² Assembly line boredom and frustration will likely not be relieved merely by telling people that the factory is the arena within which faithfulness to God should be expressed. Boring work remains boring work.

Moreover, Hong's work projects an unfortunate image of God. The practical effect of a doctrine which isolates work as the arena in which to express one's devotion to God, is to invoke divine sanction upon the status quo.³ To one imprisoned in the boredom and meaninglessness of work, God assumes the combined role of job foreman and jailor. The only contribution thus made is that a man involved in such work has been provided with another legitimate object for his cursing wrath since it is God who expects faithfulness under such unappealing circumstances.

The third difficulty encountered by this doctrine of vocation is that it tends to obscure the relative value in the different kinds of

¹This World and the Church, pp. 80-81.

²It should be noted that Gerhard Lenski in his Detroit studies did not find "much evidence that the doctrine of 'the Calling' is a vital force in contemporary American Protestantism." See Lenski, The Religious Factor, p. 323.

³Hong suggests that he is not attempting to dignify what one does by invoking divine sanction. Instead he suggests that he is attempting to redeem time and human life. The difference between what he protests and what he proposes, however, seems to disappear. See Hong, This World and the Church, pp. 77ff.

work performed. The doctrine implies a leveling of all vocations in the sight of God. To speak of an equality of persons before God does not necessarily imply an equality of vocations.

Finally, Hong uses categories to describe the Christian man which are difficult to substantiate. To argue that a Christian man will automatically do the good is to invoke the image of a man who likely does not exist in the grime, sweat, and cunningness of this world and to ignore a number of items which suggest a different image of man. First of all, there is the detectable presence of human perversion among Christians. In addition, some psychologists talk about the snarled inner nature of man, including that of professed followers of Jesus. Moreover, there is the Biblical picture of the Old Adam, active until death, even after the creation of a new being. Finally, there is the realm of personal introspection which likely will not reveal the image of a Christian man automatically doing the good.

Christian man, robbed of his several masks, not only falters in the fulfillment of faithfulness, but also in the apprehension of what he ought to do, as the church's attitude toward racial minorities in this century illustrates. The ethical imperative, the "ought," therefore, seems to be a necessary part of one's vocabulary in describing the relationship of man to his neighbor on this side of the parousia.

Dr. Hong also criticized severely Reinhold Niebuhr's understanding of Luther's ethics in The Nature and Destiny of Man. In that book, Hong understands Niebuhr to exaggerate Luther's desire for order and to deprecate Luther's desire for justice. Hong argues instead that Bishop Berggrav more correctly understood Luther's view, that Luther qualified obedience to the state by placing the latter under both divine and natural

law, and that thus Luther also understood organized society to stand under God's judgment. Hong therefore contends that the Norwegian Lutherans "found the very guidance and encouragement they needed in Luther and the New Testament."¹

There were other brief articles dealing with social issues in ELC publications during this period, but they were not of sufficient number nor strength to arouse very quickly a slumbering church. These articles touched on such items as recognition of Red China, labor's stance in relation to the church, release time, foreign aid, and peace-time military training.²

As the ELC moved closer to formation of The ALC in 1960, the Lutheran Herald devoted a number of articles to the new Commission on Social Action which was to be a part of the merged church. Dr. Carl F. Reuss, the man chosen to head the commission in the merged church, explained the role which the new group would play as a constructive critic

¹This World and the Church, pp. 91-99.

²See for example, Rolf Syrdal, "Why Recognize Communist China?", Lutheran Herald, March 17, 1959, pp. 6-7; [Malmin], "The Recognition Question," ibid., pp. 14-15; F. A. Schiotz, "On the Cleveland Conference," ibid., August 18, 1959, pp. 3-5; Norman G. Anderson, "According to My Notion," ibid., December 3, 1946, pp. 1098-1099; Anderson, "The Area of Repose," ibid., December 10, 1946, pp. 1124-1125; Anderson, "They Don't Trust the Churches," ibid., December 17, 1946, pp. 1148-1149; Anderson, "From Diagnosis to Therapy," ibid., December 31, 1946, pp. 1198-1199; [Malmin], "What of Release Time Now?", ibid., April 13, 1948, pp. 363-364; Schiotz, "The Church and Foreign Aid," ibid., July 2, 1957, p. 651; Schiotz, "The Foreign Aid Program," ibid., April 1, 1958, pp. 13 and 18; [Malmin], "Peacetime Military Training," ibid., July 3, 1945, p. 495; Morris Hursh, "The Church and Social Legislation," ibid., February 18, 1947, pp. 169 and 176; L. S. Imm, "The Church and Co-operatives," ibid., September 30, 1947, pp. 952-953; Maynard Iverson, "Concerning The Church and Politics," ibid., October 16, 1956, pp. 1018-1019; and [Malmin], "We Join in Protest," ibid., July 16, 1946, pp. 659-660; "Wisconsin Faces a Grave Issue," ibid., September 10, 1946, pp. 807-808; "Church and State--North Dakota Version," ibid., May 11, 1948, pp. 363-364; "God and Caesar," ibid., September 3, 1957, pp. 830-831; and "The Assembly and the Atom," ibid., September 10, 1957, p. 854.

through studies to stimulate thinking and to promote discussion. He further commented on a fairly wide range of topics including, for example, principles involving effective citizenship and labor-management relations.¹ The commission was to function as a catalyst in the merged church, but its work was not yet sufficiently understood in the ELC to have a great effect upon the membership.

A foreshadowing of developments in the merged church was expressed in 1959 by Dr. Loren Halvorson, a member of the staff of the ELC department of college education. He argued that the church was not effectively encountering the world. He said:

This world the Church will never encounter as long as it remains behind monastic walls. If the life and preaching of the Church is to be prophetic and transforming, then it must find its way somehow beyond its isolated role and out into the secular world. Our day calls for a new "foreign" mission effort of the Church across the new distance created by the modern world. Such a mission must reach into the secular roles in which our people live, into their ghettos, into the whole range of modern life . . . to Mr. A. as carpenter, union member, voter, father, sportsman, husband and secretary of the South Fourth Street Boat Club.²

Dr. Halvorson proceeded to summon the church to find what he termed a "middle ground" where the church and the world could maintain authentic roles and yet encounter one another. He suggested the familiar idea that the church listen to what the world had to say in order that she might

¹See Carl F. Reuss, "From Concern to Action," June 21, 1960, Lutheran Herald, pp. 5-6; "Our World-Wide Task," ibid., July 5, 1960, pp. 3-4; "Men Versus Machines," ibid., July 19, 1960, pp. 2-3; "Constructive Critic," ibid., December 6, 1960, pp. 2-3; "The Christian, the Church, and Social Problems," ibid., February 17, 1959, pp. 14-15; "Flights from Reality," ibid., March 3, 1959, pp. 12-13; "Courtship and Marriage," ibid., April 7, 1959, pp. 6-7; "Parents and Children," ibid., May 5, 1959, pp. 12-13; "Our Faith and Our Work," ibid., May 26, 1959, pp. 8-9; "Economic Issues That Confront Christians," June 9, 1959, pp. 10-11; and "Intelligent Citizenship Requires Facts," ibid., May 31, 1960, pp. 8-9.

²"The Church and the World: Co-existence or Encounter," ibid., September 29, 1959, pp. 9-11 and 16.

discover the world. He said this could best be done through retreat centers and meetings where the church would assemble with representatives of various vocational groups, as the evangelical academy movement in post-war Germany had done. After the merger, the newly formed ALC was to move ahead in this direction.

It would therefore have to be said that the ELC did not develop as broad a base for social responsibility as did the other three churches under study. There were individuals who had caught a vision of this new concern and had made some kind of personal embodiment of it. Much teaching would be required to produce significant change. Little discernible assistance had come from Luther Seminary in St. Paul. Some of this teaching would have to come from the partners to the new merger. Dr. Carl F. Reuss stood in the wings ready to provide pedagogical leadership.

CHAPTER VII
THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Introduction

The winds of change were blowing more strongly over the American Lutheran Church during the post-war era than across the ELC insofar as social action was concerned. The depression and the war had created an uneasiness in the ALC concerning older positions and consequently in 1940, the biennial convention had voted to ask the executive committee to establish a committee to study the social trends of the times and to provide some guidance for the church.¹ It was an epoch-making decision.

The locus for responsibility concerning this work as well as the scope which such work ought to entail was not permanently fixed during the war years. Consequently at a meeting of the Board of Charities in the fall of 1945, ALC President Emmanuel Poppen urged that board to enlarge its scope to include social action and to change its name to indicate the new breadth of purpose. The board minutes record Poppen as saying that "what is needed . . . is awakening the consciousness of our members to their social obligations and a program to carry this vital Christianity into every congregation and every home."² The 1946 con-

¹See supra, p. 103.

²Minutes of the Board of Charities of the American Lutheran Church, September 26-27, 1945, p. 5 (in office of the Commission on Research and Social Action, The American Lutheran Church).

vention approved the suggestion and in 1948 voted officially to change the name of the responsible group from the Board of Charities to the Board for Christian Social Action.¹

Despite the uneasiness that surfaced nationally in the 40's, it does not appear that the development of a broadening sense of social responsibility within the ALC was as widely based as in Augustana or the ULCA. Instead, the movement seems to have focused more upon one man, Dr. Carl F. Reuss, who had received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in sociology from the University of Virginia. In 1947, he was named executive secretary of what was still called the Board of Charities, a position which he held on a part time basis until 1951, by which time the board had been renamed.²

As a teacher and sociologist, Dr. Reuss effectively taught the ALC to "get at the facts" before reaching conclusions. Trained to be as objective as possible in the evaluation of data, Reuss gained the respect of all sides to an issue for the fairness with which data and questions were examined. He performed many functions: research consultant, analyst, writer, teacher, administrator, and low-keyed promoter. In addition, he served as a member of the NLC Committee on Social Trends, the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference, and the Commission on Inner Missions of the Lutheran World Federation.

Among the new duties assigned Reuss and the new board were "research and study on the pressing social problems of the day," and

¹ALC, Minutes (1946), pp. 181 and 188; and (1948), pp. 151 and 359-360.

²Minutes, Board of Charities, ALC, February 6, 1947, p. 2; and Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, July 9-10, 1951, p. 7 (in office of the Commission on Research and Social Action, The ALC).

"dissemination of the findings of its research and study through already-existing and yet-to-be-developed channels of communication for the information and education of the members of the American Lutheran Church."¹

Dr. Reuss took his mandate seriously. His mind and pen roved across a wide range of social problems and produced a raft of statements on such topics as government fiscal policies and birth control, race relations and euthanasia. In this effort, Dr. Reuss sometimes utilized statements drafted by other Lutheran agencies such as the American Lutheran Conference and the National Lutheran Council. In this manner, an interchange of ideas between these agencies and the ALC occurred.

The Inter-Relationship of Church, State, and Society

One of the questions which had bothered American Lutherans was the question of the proper relationship between church and state. This question haunted Lutherans in part because of the way they understood Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms. Hovering over the discussions was a special majesty ascribed to Paul's injunction in Romans 13 to obey existing powers. The ULCA, Augustana, and the ALC all took a serious look at the question during this period under study.

An opportunity for Dr. Reuss and the Board for Christian Social Action to exert leadership arose in 1948. The ALC, which followed the practice of giving special emphasis to one particular theme during a given calendar year, decided to focus its attention that year on Christian citizenship, and asked the social action board to take charge. To stimulate discussion, the board published two pamphlets. One of these, Christian Social Living, was a compilation of statements formulated by the

¹ALC, Minutes (1946), pp. 181-182 and 188. See also Minutes, Board of Charities, ALC, February 20-21, 1946, p. 2 of Appendix B.

Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference. The other, The Church's Social Ministry, was a statement prepared by the Committee on Lutheran Social Action of the ALC's Ohio District.

The Ohio District pamphlet suggested some theological pre-suppositions concerning social action. Included among these assertions was the statement that "God in Christ does not repudiate, or annihilate, the natural order, but redeems it."¹ Also articulated were what was termed ten "basic ethical affirmations of the Gospel." These included what was described as "the divine origin and essential unity of the human family," based on the affirmation in Acts 17 that "God has made of one blood all the nations of men," as well as the assertion of "equal value and dignity of all men, irrespective of color, race, or social status," based on Paul's argument that "before God there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus." Further affirmations involved the need for man's love for his neighbor, the divine establishment of the social order, the exercise of responsible freedom including the freedom to seek the truth, the duty to pursue peace and good will among nations, and a plea for humane and patient treatment of people in need.² Each affirmation was supported by Bible references, all but one of which come from the New Testament.

The statement confessed "that, in general, the Lutheran Church has not accepted as it should its responsibility as a prophetic interpreter of history and culture, especially in America." The writers further warned that "Lutherans especially must take care to avoid the danger of letting the doctrine of justification betray them into an anti-

¹The Church's Social Ministry (Columbus, 1947), p. 9.

²Ibid., pp. 10-11.

nomian scepticism regarding the relative value of human ethical zeal," While good works were not soteriologically sufficient for salvation, the report stated, "it does not follow that all human acts, sinful as they are, are ethically valueless and subject to contempt and cynical disparagement." Then in words reminiscent of Walter Rauschenbusch, the article asserted that "in certain respects, corporate evils are more insidious than the other forms of evil."¹

Sounding a note different from that normally expressed by American Lutherans only a few decades earlier, the report went on to state that "it has not been sufficiently realized in the past that preventive therapy for social ills is, in the long run, more beneficent than remedial therapy." The report contended that on public matters involving moral issues, "the church has the right and duty to make representations to the public authorities in order to help reach a desirable decision."²

The statement then briefly proceeded to endorse democracy, to rebuke capitalism, to acknowledge partial responsibility on the part of the church for the rise of nazism, fascism, and communism, to label war as sin, and to call for racial integration of worship life.³

Such a statement suggests a step away from complete separation of the two realms. The ALC had now begun to accept partial responsibility for the direction of society and they sought to outline guidelines. In doing so, the writers acknowledged drawing ideas from such ecumenical sources as the Life and Work movement, the Federal Council of Churches,

¹The Church's Social Ministry, pp. 12-15.

²Ibid., pp. 19 and 21.

³Ibid., pp. 23-26.

the Lutheran World Convention, and the National Study Conference on the Churches and a Just and Durable Peace. The base for social action was thus being broadened.¹

A further indication of the trend which was developing within the ALC was expressed by the 1948 biennial convention. At that meeting, the Board for Christian Social Action submitted a statement of "Aims and Purposes of the ALC in its Program of Christian Social Action." The delegates were in a responsive mood. First they approved a resolution encouraging the board "to continue its efforts to give a more adequate interpretation of the relationship between Christian Social Action and the local pastor and his congregation." Second, they approved the statement of aims and purposes.²

One of the first affirmations to be made in the adopted statement was that "the Church, through its members, must work for the permeation of the Christian gospel into the whole of daily living." Therefore the statement also said:

The American Lutheran Church looks upon individual members of the human race, whatever their color or station in life, as human beings who must be brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, their Savior, and a right relationship with Him; it also sees each individual as a unique personality whose highest earthly lot can be achieved only when he lives harmoniously in personally satisfying and socially desirable relationships with God, his fellow men, and the social order.³

No elaboration was given to the meaning of "personally satisfying" and "socially desirable" relationships. A segregationist could therefore likely also assent to such a pronouncement.

¹The Church's Social Ministry, p. 23.

²ALC, Minutes (1948), pp. 152 and 156-159.

³Ibid., p. 156.

Reflecting the principles first enunciated by the Ohio District social action group, the statement said it was the duty of ALC members to support and participate in

. . . efforts to reshape the social and economic structure where and when it evidences maladjustments, in order first to prevent, so far as possible, those conditions which cause persons to seek outside help in coping with their own affairs; and in order, second, to provide a social environment favorable to the fullest development of individual human capacities.¹

This action constituted a formal repudiation of the quietistic stance which would so separate the spheres of church and state as to deny the church the right to speak to its members about secular concerns. It extended the function of the church considerably beyond what Reu and Buehring had expressed earlier.²

District presidents started to reflect a new posture. Speaking in Texas in 1949 concerning the impact of the previous year's emphasis on Christian citizenship, District President C. N. Roth said that Lutherans had "pressed the doctrine of separation of church and state to such an extent, that in many instances we took the stand as though we had nothing to do with the state." Commenting at the 1956 Northwestern District convention, President S. C. Siefkes said he feared

that in the past, we have so over-emphasized the concept of separation of church and state and have felt so secure in our positions of letting the church be the church and the state be the state, trusting that ne'er the twain should meet, that we awakened almost too late to realize that such an absolute separation of church and state is neither possible, desirable, or God-pleasing, especially in a democracy.³

¹ALC, Minutes (1948), p. 157. See also [E. W. Schramm], "The Things of Caesar," Lutheran Standard, July 10, 1948, pp. 6-7.

²See supra, pp. 92ff.

³Texas District, ALC, Minutes (1949), p. 13; and Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1956), p. 6.

The change and redemption of society, therefore, about which the early social gospel leaders had felt so urgently, was now becoming a formally accepted part of the total ministry of the American Lutheran Church. The Ohio District provided the earliest group leadership. It was they who voted at their 1945 convention to ask the ALC to establish a commission on social action because of what they termed the "social revolution." That district also voted in 1945 to establish a permanent social action committee of its own and urged other districts to do likewise.¹ The social action committee was designed, as Ohio District President J. W. Schillinger expressed it, to help the church be both the conscience and the good samaritan of society. When the district convention met a year later, the delegates voted to divide the work of social action into four categories supervised by four sub-committees. These categories involved state legislation, public morals, industrial relations, and national and international affairs.² Michigan shared the stage with the Ohio District by also establishing a Commission on Welfare and Social Action in 1945.³ Five years later at the national convention, the ALC voted to instruct all its districts to establish committees for social action.⁴

The editor of the Lutheran Standard, E. W. Schramm, hailed the establishment of district social action committees as a good beginning to

¹Ohio District, ALC, Minutes (1945), pp. 7 and 39.

²Ibid., p. 19; and (1946), p. 32.

³Michigan District, ALC, ibid. (1945), p. 17.

⁴ALC, ibid. (1950), p. 269. See also Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, November 12-13, 1951, Appendix C, for instructions to social action committees to develop "an enlightened Christian conscience" concerning social trends and issues.

get under way discussion and concern relating to social issues. He said that "the Lutheran Church is about twenty five years behind other churches in such matters. But we are on the way now."¹

Other districts also moved in the new direction lauded by Schramm. ". . . we confess before God our failure as a church to be an active conscience of the American people on the social and economic issues . . .", the California District voted to say at its 1950 convention.² Michigan, in 1952, approved a digest of the statement on aims and purposes adopted by the 1948 national convention.³ By 1959, both the Northwestern and the Wisconsin districts were voting to ask their congregations to establish social action committees on the congregational level, and encouraging them to hold forums for the discussion of public issues.⁴ A few statements were made and actions taken at district conventions early in this period which were reminiscent of a former era, but they represented minority action in the ALC, out of step with the trends of the times.⁵ The mainstream was represented by the observation of the Central District in 1957 that "an increasing impact is being felt throughout the church at large from the work of the Board for Christian Social Action, and we likewise note an increasing

¹[Schramm], "Falling in Line," Lutheran Standard, June 23, 1945, p. 9.

²California District, ALC, Minutes (1950), p. 53.

³Michigan District, ALC, ibid. (1952), p. 42.

⁴Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1959), p. 54; and Wisconsin District, ALC, ibid., (1959), p. 54.

⁵See for example, Dakota District, ALC, ibid. (1947), p. 16; Michigan District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 36; Minnesota District, ALC, ibid. (1947), pp. 8 and 19; and Wisconsin District, ALC, ibid. (1947), pp. 21 and 28.

effectiveness achieved on the district level by our District Social Action committee."¹

Discussion of the relationship between church and state continued in the ALC throughout much of this period.² A formal statement on the subject was adopted by the ALC at its 1956 convention, the second year during this period in which Christian citizenship was given national attention by that church body.

The adopted statement was in part a response to a set of theses submitted to the Lutheran World Federation at Hannover, Germany, in 1952 by the Church of Norway. The theses grew out of the experience of the Church of Norway during World War II. They emphasized Berggrav's point of view that government existed under the lordship and judgment of God, that obedience was due government only so long as it functioned according to law, with justice, and that under the tyranny of a nationalistic idolatry, a Christian ought to obey God rather than men.³ The ALC Board for Christian Social Action thought that the wording of the theses could be made more applicable to the American scene and hence requested Dr. Reuss to prepare a new set.⁴

¹Central District, ALC, Minutes (1957), p. 56. See also Central District, ALC, ibid. (1951), p. 16; (1953), p. 42; Eastern District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 3; Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1945), pp. 21-26; (1953), pp. 31-32; Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1950), pp. 37-39; (1956), p. 40; Wisconsin District, ALC, ibid. (1951), pp. 16 and 22; (1952), p. 37; and Texas District, ALC, ibid. (1957), p. 106.

²Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, ALC, December 6, 1946, p. 6. Dr. Reuss set the tone for the emphasis year, outlining the goals and stimulating discussion. See for example, Reuss, "Introducing Christian Citizenship," Lutheran Standard, April 17, 1948, pp. 8-9; and "The Christian Life in My Community," ibid., June 19, 1948, pp. 6-7.

³Carl E. Lund-Quist (ed.), The Proceedings of the Second Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (Gunzenhausen, Bavaria: 1952), pp. 14 and 33-36.

⁴Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, ALC, April 14-15,

The ALC statement rejected any reliance on the state by the church to achieve the latter's objectives as well as any attempts by the state to utilize the church for what was termed "narrowly nationalistic ends." Church and state had the common purpose of "meeting particular needs in the life of human beings. Where the interests and the well-being of persons are concerned, church and state may cooperate freely in focusing their efforts on this common objective," the report said.¹

Sovereignty was limited, and therefore the statement said:

The authority of the [sic] state is never absolute, but rests upon laws duly enacted and impartially administered, is exercised under God, and is limited to the beneficent purposes of supporting those who do that which is good and executing His wrath upon those who do evil . . .

Should the state practice or condone lawlessness, or allow conditions which are consistently destructive of man's productive and responsible independence, it no longer serves either God or man. Should the state seek to compel total allegiance, by refusing to acknowledge the absolute sovereignty of God, that state tries to compel idolatry. In such instances the Christian remembers, "we ought to obey God rather than men" . . .²

The doctrine of the two kingdoms was affirmed to denote the two "primary spheres of responsibility" for both church and state, but the statement went on to declare that the doctrine "must not be made to support the view that the state has no concern for spiritual values nor that the church has no interest in temporal realities." Hence the state-

1953, p. 4. Also used in the preparation of the statement was a document relating to church and state considered by the NLC in 1936. There were sharp differences, however, as for example the NLC proposition that "the church may have to accept regulation on the part of the state." See Proceedings, NLC, 1936, Exhibit III, item 1. A document on "Church and State" prepared by the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference was also used. There were, however, substantial differences. See text of conference statement in Christian Social Living, pp. 24-26.

¹ALC, Minutes (1956), pp. 323ff.

²Ibid., p. 325. See also Iowa District, ALC, ibid. (1948), p. 5.

ment concluded with the assertion that "to stress obedience to powers that be as to lead to uncritical and passive acceptance of anything governmental is false teaching which Lutherans must repudiate."¹ The ideas expressed in these theses, therefore, while worded differently from those submitted to the LWF by the Church of Norway, nevertheless embodied the thought of the Norwegian theses and reflected a formal rejection of quietistic acquiescence to the status quo. The power of Romans 13 on the thinking of American Lutherans regarding their relationship to the state seems to have been broken, and the experience of the churches of Europe seems to have assisted that breach with tradition.

Having thus defined its aims and purposes, among which was to enlighten and arouse the conscience of ALC members regarding social issues, and having agreed that cooperation could exist between church and state, the ALC embarked on a path to assist its members in their thought and action concerning such issues. To be sure, occasional apprehension was expressed. The Board for Christian Social Action circulated numerous statements within the ALC for study and reaction. Apparently some misgivings were expressed that these statements for study represented official policy. Consequently at the 1954 convention, the board carefully reported to the convention that its circulated statements were reflections of the board and not intended to represent official church policy, which, the board said, could only be established by the national convention. The board said it pursued the policy of circulating unadopted statements in order to stimulate thinking, and invited critical response. The delegates did respond by adopting a resolution urging the board both to continue its preparation of such statements for study and

¹ALC, Minutes (1956), pp. 325 and 326.

to "exercise discretion" in circulating them, lest they be understood to reflect officially adopted positions of the church.¹

Two years later, however, the ALC indicated that cautious concern about probable misunderstanding of board actions was not going to deter them from attempts to develop an ever broadening social consciousness in that church. The delegates adopted a statement, entitled "Christians Are Responsible Citizens," in which they voted to say, among other things, that "segregation or integration, civil liberties, the dealings of nations with nations, foreign aid projects, the Suez crisis, the plight of a divided Germany, the pressures upon people behind the Iron and Bamboo curtains--these are issues to which Biblical principles are relevant."² Such a statement would have warmed the heart of a Rauschenbusch and caused him to revise his judgment of the quietistic Lutherans. It also shows formal recognition of a new relationship between church and state and church and society.

In this effort to move the church in a new direction and to relate the faith to public issues, the Board for Christian Social Action received little encouragement from the two ALC theological seminaries, namely Wartburg Seminary at Dubuque, Iowa, and the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary at Columbus, Ohio. Even as late as 1960, neither of the two

¹ALC, Minutes (1954), pp. 295-296. It should be noted that in making pronouncements, the ALC understood itself foremost to be speaking primarily to its members rather than for its members to the world, although any public action also gave the impression of the latter. Dr. Reuss emphasized that in expressing itself, the ALC entertained no intention to establish a new canon law nor to produce a series of encyclicals. Interview with Dr. Carl F. Reuss, director, Commission on Research and Social Action, The ALC, December 1, 1961. See also Reuss' report to the final meeting of the Board for Christian Social Action, November 19, 1960, pp. 2-3.

²ALC, Minutes (1956), p. 317.

ALC seminaries had a full time professor of ethics.¹ Consequently the ALC was deprived of the theological undergirding which developed in Augustana and the ULCA. All the heavier responsibility, therefore, rested on Dr. Reuss and the Board for Christian Social Action.

Pioneering Efforts in a Variety of Areas

Dr. Reuss provided the ALC with statements covering a wider variety of areas than were covered in any other Lutheran church studied. Not all of the statements were formally adopted by the church. The procedure often was to submit statements to the pastors or congregations to stimulate discussion and response and thus encourage a broader sense of social responsibility.

During this period, the Board for Christian Social Action prepared or edited for distribution statements covering such subjects as marriage, divorce, planned parenthood, farming, labor relations, government fiscal policies, race, euthanasia, capital punishment, freedom for discussion, gambling, alcohol, church and state, subversive movements, foreign aid, international affairs, public schools, mass communications, movies, censorship, and the rural church.²

¹See Annual Catalog, Wartburg Theological Seminary, 1960-1961, p. 43; and Annual Catalog, The Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, 1960, pp. 32 and 35. See, however, an endorsement of social action stated in general terms by Prof. Albert Jagnow of Wartburg Seminary in Iowa District, ALC, Minutes (1948), p. 5. It should also be noted that at the 1956 convention, a Wartburg Seminary professor was elected to the social action board, on which he remained only briefly. Also, in 1957, another board member joined the Wartburg Seminary faculty. Thus during the last few years, the board did have seminary representation, but by that time the board had laid its groundwork and gone through its most critical period.

²In 1960, the Board for Christian Social Action printed and distributed a revised edition of The Christian in His Social Living. In it were published the statements adopted by the ALC at its national conventions, as well as edited versions of other statements adopted and circulated by the board or prepared by the Commission on Social Relations

Of the areas studied, two will be described in separate sections. One of these will be planned parenthood and the related topics of marriage and divorce, where the ALC made its most significant contribution. The other will be race relations, an issue on which the church received considerable prodding from social forces.

One of the first areas in which the ALC expressed its concern about public policy related to war and peace. Several district conventions voted to protest the inauguration of universal military training and urged their membership to write Congress voicing opposition.¹ Other districts expressed opposition to the Potsdam agreements.² Still other districts voted to petition the chairmen of the Senate and House military affairs committees requesting the immediate release of conscientious objectors. Cooperation was urged with civil defense leaders. Pleas were made to reject war hysteria and war's inevitability. Greater observance of human rights, more attention to the economically needy, support for the United Nations, and concern for justice were said to be the ways in which peace might prevail.³

of the American Lutheran Conference and the Committee on Social Trends of the National Lutheran Council. The references to this pamphlet in this paper are all cited from the 1960 edition.

¹See for example, Central District, ALC, Minutes (1946), p. 61; Illinois District, ALC, ibid. (1947), p. 48; (1948), p. 55; Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1948), p. 34; and Wisconsin District, ALC, ibid. (1953), p. 38. See also Texas District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 15. The Board for Christian Social Action had also adopted a statement opposing UMT. See Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 7-8, 1952, p. 6 and Appendix C.

²California District, ALC, Minutes (1946), p. 25; Central District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 61; Illinois District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 57; and Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 24. See also Texas District, ALC, ibid. (1946), pp. 14-15.

³Eastern District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 55; Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1958), p. 10; Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1948), p. 33; (1951), pp. 50-52; and Minnesota District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 7.

Articles appeared in Lutheran Standard calling for international control of the atomic bomb,¹ for an end to war preparations, and for the inauguration of a program to feed the world's hungry. Caution was urged before beginning UMT. Ecumenical efforts on behalf of human rights and atom control were noted. Even the ALC Luther League, the youth auxiliary of the church, recorded itself in favor of disarmament and opposed to UMT.²

When the Korean conflict erupted, the Board for Christian Social Action approved a statement for circulation in the church, entitled, "The International Crisis." It called on all Christians to confess their sin contributing to this failure and warned United States citizens not to think of a war against Communism as a holy war.³ The national convention endorsed a statement from the Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee calling on Christians to overcome national antagonisms in the pursuit of peace.⁴ In 1954, the convention recommended to the congregations for study a statement from the social action board entitled,

¹The ALC did not address herself specifically to the harsh realities of nuclear war. At the final ALC convention, the social action board suggested the need to study the topic. There was not sufficient time to complete the project. See ALC, Minutes (1960), p. 262.

²See Richard M. Fagley, "The Atomic Bomb and the Crisis of Man," Lutheran Standard, September 29, 1945, p. 5; Ernest W. Karsten, "Have Christians No Better Solution?", ibid., March 27, 1948, pp. 8-9; [E. Schramm], "Let's Look Well before We Leap," ibid., November 14, 1953, p. 11; O. F. Nolde, "The UN Works for Human Rights," ibid., January 31, 1948, p. 6; Carl F. Reuss, "Blocking the Spread of Communism," ibid., February 19, 1955, pp. 10 and 16; [Schramm], "The Church and the Bomb," ibid., August 31, 1957, p. 11; and "ALC Leaguers Look at War and Peace," ibid., November 28, 1953, p. 8.

³Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, July 24-25, 1950, p. 5 and Appendix C. See also revised text in The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 80-81.

⁴ALC, Minutes (1950), p. 395.

"Peace and Security," in which the biblical injunctions relating to peace were emphasized and caution was expressed concerning the kinds of material resources in which people tended to place their hope for security.¹ During the last year of its existence, the social action board voted to revise and refer to the congregations for study two documents prepared by the NLC Committee on Social Trends, entitled "Toward A Statement on National Policy," and a "Position Paper on Foreign Aid."²

Possible controversy did not seem to inhibit board action. At the height of the McCarthy era, the Board for Christian Social Action adopted a statement entitled "Freedom for Discussion" and circulated it among the congregations. The statement warned that "the freedom so necessary for objective discussion of controversial questions is in danger in the United States. Even he who tries only to give a sympathetic interpretation of unpopular views runs the risk of being called subversive or un-American."³ Reference was made, for example, to the strong pressure for intellectual conformity and for the deletion of favorable estimates of pacifism and communism in text books, the practice of releasing police or FBI testimony to the public prior to a fair trial with such testimony accepted as verdicts, and the tendency to smear public leaders for past associations. Such practices and the limitation of discussion were said to be marks of fascist and communist efforts at thought control. The committee therefore urged the ALC to resist

¹ALC, Minutes (1954), pp. 322-323.

²Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, May 7-9, 1959, pp. 13-14. See also The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 81-84 for revised texts.

³Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 15-16, 1954, "Freedom for Discussion," p. 1. See also The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 55-57.

"vigorously" all efforts to repress discussion of issues.¹ Earlier the board had adopted a policy statement protesting the public disclosure of the names of persons on relief rolls.²

In the Wisconsin and Ohio districts, reports expressed concern about indiscriminate charges of communism against some persons and about the freedom of conscience and expression.³ Dr. Reuss wrote in the Lutheran Standard warning against the danger of censorship and the establishment of "local vigilante committees."⁴ Editor Schramm attacked McCarthyism, saying that any Christian supporting it was committing "moral suicide." He agreed that Americans had to fight communism but not with un-American methods. Even prior to the rise of McCarthy, Schramm spoke of the debt Americans owed to dissenters in terms of the rights which the latter gained for others, and protested calling David E. Lilienthal a Communist.⁵

Aid to education on both the national and state levels also

¹Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 15-16, 1954, "Freedom for Discussion," p. 2.

²Ibid., November 18-19, 1952, p. 4, and Appendix D entitled, "Privacy--A Sacred Treasure."

³Wisconsin District, ALC, Minutes (1953), p. 38; and Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1948), p. 34.

⁴"Some Thoughts on Censorship," Lutheran Standard, May 11, 1957, pp. 10-11. See also Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 18-20, 1957, p. 9. The board urged Reuss to publish the article in the Standard, but did not officially endorse it. While warning against dangers of censorship, Reuss spoke of permitting police action based on laws subject to review and redress in the courts. For revised text, see The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 101-103.

⁵"New Need for Accenting Truth," Lutheran Standard, July 24, 1954, pp. 13-14; "Our Debt to Dissenters," ibid., January 20, 1945, p. 9; and "Unchristian Labels," ibid., March 8, 1947, p. 9. See also article by G. E. Lenski, "What about Mr. McCarthy?", ibid., August 15, 1952, p. 8, in which Lenski said McCarthy was unfit for high office.

commanded the attention of a number of people within the ALC during this period. In 1946, the Wisconsin District approved a resolution expressing stiff opposition to providing bus transportation for parochial school students and urged ALC members to oppose such policy. A year later the Central District voted to urge taxpayers to insist that publicly elected representatives be members of parochial school boards wherever such institutions received public funds. Over in Ohio, the 1949 convention heartily endorsed federal aid to public school education.¹

In 1954, the Board for Christian Social Action adopted and then revised a statement concerning the state and the public school. A preliminary version of it was submitted to the ALC national convention that year, which in turn commended it to the membership for study with the request that reactions be submitted to the board which had prepared it. No suggestions for revision were received, however. Therefore at the 1958 convention, the social action board submitted its final version of "The Christian and His Public Schools," which was adopted by the convention in a slightly revised form.²

The statement contended that the responsibility for the education of the child rested with the parents, who could legitimately unite to have their children educated in tax-supported public schools or in private schools. Should parents choose the latter course, however, it was said that tax support of the public school was still an obligation. On the question of government aid to private schools, the statement af-

¹Wisconsin District, ALC, Minutes (1946), p. 56; Central District, ALC, ibid. (1947), p. 55; and Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1949), pp. 39-40.

²See Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 15-16, 1954, Appendix D; and May 11-13, 1954, p. 4. See also ALC, Minutes (1954), pp. 300-302; and (1958), pp. 363-365 and 540-541.

firmed some principles but hedged regarding its application:

Funds raised through taxation for public education should be used only in support of publicly controlled education. A church school may accept for the benefit of its pupils any governmental benefits which accrue solely to the individual without regard to his status as a student. How to separate the acceptable from the unacceptable forms of state benefits is an extremely difficult problem. When it is not clear what is within permissible limits, the Church should refuse to accept governmental benefits.¹

The social action board had proposed a paragraph saying hot lunch programs, health services, and safety education represented acceptable benefits, had placed bus transportation in the debatable though doubtful category, and had rejected completely such items as textbooks, staff salaries, building, and maintenance costs. At this point, however, the convention overruled the board by revising the statement to read as recorded above, and by instructing the board to give further study "to defining acceptable and unacceptable forms of governmental benefits for church schools." Caution was also expressed concerning a too uncritical acceptance of released time school. The teaching "about religion" in the public schools as distinguished from a teaching "of religion" was endorsed and the question of religious exercises in the schools was left to local discretion, provided all action was in conformity with state and national laws, and provided the rights of religious minorities as well as of those who were termed the "irreligious" were respected.²

Positions in the ALC were shifting. Further evidence that this church was moving into new areas of accepted social responsibility was

¹ALC, Minutes (1958), pp. 364 and 541. See also a protest against use of public funds for bus transportation of parochial school children in an article by US Supreme Court Justice Jackson, "The Court Turns Back the Clock," Lutheran Standard, March 15, 1947, pp. 5 and 7.

²See ALC, Official Reports (1958), p. 315; and ALC, Minutes (1958), pp. 363-365 and 540-541.

reflected by social action board statements in five other fields relating to economic, governmental, and medical practices.¹

As a church which for years had had a predominantly rural background, it is not surprising to find that the initial concern of the ALC in the economic area related to rural questions. In the fall of 1950, the Board for Christian Social Action adopted a statement entitled "The Christian and Farming." The document was nearly identical with a statement entitled "Man and the Land," recommended to the American Lutheran Conference in 1950 by its Commission on Social Relations. The statement spoke of land as a gift from God as a consequence of which Christians ought to be very concerned about the conservation of natural resources. While suggesting that the Old Testament sections regarding ownership of land were not necessarily binding in the form in which they were expressed in the Hebrew tradition, the statement nevertheless went on to rest its case for the defense of the family farm rather heavily on the Old Testament assertions.²

In 1954, the ALC national convention took its most significant action relating to economic matters when it voted to authorize the Board

¹A new thrust concerning the question of alcohol was also made in a paper presented to the Board for Christian Social Action by Dr. Reuss at the November 2-3, 1959, meeting. It was recommended by the board to the congregations for study. The fairly lengthy document dealt with the problems involved in drinking, some biblical statements relating to it, some of the causes of alcoholism, as well as criteria for judging proposals to deal with the question. The paper accepted the possibility that Christians could drink with moderation and said abstinence could be "commended as a spiritual discipline." See Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, November 2-3, 1959, p. 12 as well as The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 59-70. The document, however, was not adopted by the board.

²Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, November 16, 1950, Appendix A. See also The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 26-28.

for Christian Social Action to proceed with an experimental project in church-industry relations to be located in some large metropolitan center. The intent was to investigate and test the advisability of an industrial chaplaincy program. The man who accepted the position was a clergyman serving on the social action board, namely the Rev. Theodore J. Pretzlaff. He had had no special training in economics, but he had served parishes in such cities as Detroit and Toledo, during which time he had become very concerned about the interplay between religion and economic affairs.¹

The idea of an industrial chaplaincy was eventually dropped. Instead, it was decided to work through congregational structures and to designate pastors in key industrial areas as contact clergymen for labor-management personnel. Some fifty-eight pastors were so designated. The Rev. Mr. Pretzlaff continued on an individual basis to establish contact with leaders in labor unions and management personnel and reported that they were interested in his work. Conferences were established for clergy and top union and management executives. Pretzlaff's name was added to the roster of the Federal Mediation and Arbitration Service and he was elected to the board of directors of the National Religion and Labor Fellowship. He also participated in the work of the Department of Church and Economic Life of the National Council of Churches and attempted to stimulate discussion of economic affairs at various conferences in the ALC.²

¹ALC, Minutes (1954), pp. 302-303. See also Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 8-9, 1955, p. 2; and October 5-7, 1955, p. 1.

²For a five-year summary of his work, see ALC, Minutes (1960), pp. 251-255. See also Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, 1955-1960, especially May 7-8, 1956; February 18-20, 1957; June 2-3, 1958;

One of the other functions of Mr. Pretzlaff in his new position was the preparation of literature designed to outline economic issues for discussion in the church. The most widely discussed of these involved a pamphlet entitled "The Church's Concern for Economic Life," co-authored by Pretzlaff and Reuss. Each district convention studied the pamphlet during its 1958 convention. According to Dr. Reuss, reactions to it were favorable.¹ The statement was received by the 1958 ALC national convention.²

The document asserted that God was as much concerned about economic life as church life. It referred to the frequent monotony and meaninglessness of work as well as the power of the industrial machine over man. Installment buying had encouraged people to live beyond their means, it was said. Planned obsolescence in production and the exercise of economic power without responsibility, including that of the government through its programs and taxation, were said to be problems confronting the Christian man.³

May 7-9, 1959; and November 2-3, 1959. In addition, note Central District, ALC, Minutes (1958), p. 38, which reported conducting a seminar for thirty men and women on the question of daily work; Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1959), p. 47, which recorded a resolution urging clergymen to attend labor-management conferences; and Wisconsin District, ALC, ibid. (1945), p. 5, which reported that each district conference had conducted a seminar on "The Church and Industry and Labor."

¹Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, June 2-3, 1958, p. 4. See also California District, ALC, Minutes (1958), p. 47.

²ALC, ibid., p. 360.

³Carl F. Reuss and Theodore J. Pretzlaff, The Church's Concern for Economic Life, Board for Christian Social Action, American Lutheran Church (Columbus, n.d.), pp. 3-5. See also The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 22-23. For a discussion of related views on the district level, see the report of the social action committee, Northwestern District, ALC, Minutes (1951), pp. 39-40.

An understanding of Christian stewardship, vocation, and love, as expressed in the Bible, was said to be the church's answer to man's economic need. Stewardship was said to impose a sense of duty and obligation upon a man, both toward God and his neighbor, with respect to time, talent, ability, and property. Christian vocation was viewed as a means to help man understand his calling to live his entire life as a servant of God and to utilize his work as the "opportunity to show that . . . faith makes a difference." Love was described in terms of radical self-giving agape, largely in the words of Paul's hymn of love in I Corinthians 13. Love, it was said, "will make economic affairs a means of serving the genuine interests of neighbors as well as one's own rightful interests." Despite the rather definite assertion in one paragraph that love "will make" the desired change, it was said in the next paragraph that sin made the realization of such a goal impossible. Apparently, therefore, that which love was suggested capable of producing, it could not bring forth.¹

The essay contained some problems. The statement on stewardship spoke explicitly of providence and neglected to suggest a place for the rather obvious creativity and toil on the part of man. Such an affirmation would likely be foreign to men who either daily worked in grime or who daily saw the accumulation of things, ideas, or power as a result of their own efforts. To speak not only of divine sanction for work but also of divine institution for jobs which some workers found meaningless only added excess baggage for an all powerful and supremely loving deity

¹Reuss and Pretzlaff, The Church's Concern for Economic Life, pp. 5-7. See also The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 24-25. For a similar treatment of the subject of work, see Carl F. Reuss, "Why Work," Lutheran Standard, September 11, 1948, pp. 6-7; and "After the Whistle Blows," ibid., August 21, 1948, pp. 8-9.

to carry in a world of men whose station in life reflected more of drudgery, jealousy, and competitive animosity than powerful, sensitive concern.¹ The difficulty of working from agape directly to the world occupied by human beings was illustrated by the denial in a paragraph relating to sin, that which the paragraph relating to love had asserted. The statement on economic policies was therefore noteworthy in the history of a developing social consciousness in the ALC not for what was said, but rather for the fact that the church was willing to begin, however inadequately, to investigate the economic area, to state its concern, and to suggest some possible relationships.²

Another venture to speak about economic issues occurred in 1959 when the Board for Christian Social Action received from its staff a statement on "The Christian's Concern For Government Fiscal Policies." Such participation in the affairs of the state a quarter of a century earlier would have been considered a singularly inappropriate intrusion of the church into government matters. The statement set forth in careful language the pros and cons concerning such items as a balanced budget, deficit spending, inflation, and the national debt. The statement was careful to note that there was no one specific Christian solution to

¹For a further discussion of this item, see supra, pp. 231ff.

²For an example of comments on economic issues, see the following Lutheran Standard articles: [Schramm], "How about the Coal Strike?", June 1, 1946, p. 13; "The Labor's Hire," January 25, 1947, p. 9; "One Labor Union?", February 22, 1947, p. 11; "All of Us Have a Stake in It," May 24, 1952, p. 9; "Only a Radical Cure Will Suffice," May 31, 1952, p. 10; "A Trinity of Human Privilege," June 7, 1952, p. 5; and "Evangelism and Economics," January 18, 1947, p. 7. See also, Carl F. Reuss, "When I Vote," July 19, 1952, pp. 6-7; and "What Has the Church To Do with Business and Labor?", September 8, 1945, pp. 6-7; Herbert Dimke, "Toward Industrial Peace," August 31, 1946, pp. 4-5; and G. E. Lenski, "Washington Comments," January 15, 1958, p. 11; March 1, 1958, p. 11; March 29, 1958, p. 13; April 26, 1958, p. 13; and June 7, 1958, p. 15.

the question, but the writers felt discussion of the issue by the ALC membership would be a useful step in the discharge of responsible citizenship. Hence the board voted to commend it to the congregations for study, and the final ALC convention concurred in that judgment. The statement suggested some goals for government action to serve as a basis for discussion. Such goals included the idea that government "policies should provide conditions under which all persons able and willing to work should find employment, assuming that they will move to areas of greater employment opportunity," that "productive resources should be used to effective capacity to meet human needs and wants instead of being arbitrarily limited in order to maintain prices or quotas," that "except in times of war and other national emergency, and except for capital investments that promise future benefits, each generation should pay each year the full costs of the governmental services it receives that year," that consumer interests should be protected, that taxes should be based on ability to pay while not deterring initiative, and that governmental benefits ought to go to persons in need rather than persons in power.¹

The ALC involved itself even further in other sensitive social areas when, at its final convention in 1960, it received from the Board for Christian Social Action two statements relating to capital punishment and the religious faith of candidates in the 1960 elections. The convention returned the first proposal to the social action board for further study.²

¹Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, May 7-9, 1959, p. 13; and ALC, Minutes (1960), p. 257. See also, The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 35-44.

²ALC, Minutes (1960), pp. 260-262.

The second statement, "Religious Faith and Public Office" fared better with the convention delegates. That statement was a revision of one on that topic proposed by the NLC Committee on Social Trends.¹ The essay asserted that a candidate's religious faith could be one of the legitimate factors in the decision of a voter, since faith would be one of the influences bearing on the conduct of a man in public office.

Nevertheless, the statement went on to say:

Arbitrarily to rule out candidates who are members of one or another church body is unfair, unwise, and not warranted by the record of public service written by members of different religious groups. To attempt so to rule them out is likely to alienate these persons from the remainder of the community, encourage them to band together for mutual protection and advancement, and to foster "bloc" voting by this group in defense of its imagined interests.

Just as membership in a particular religious group should not disqualify a candidate from public office, so his particular church membership alone should not entitle him to support for that office.²

The chief consideration ought to be that "the person best qualified for the position be chosen," the statement continued. Included in the list of factors for consideration were integrity, courage, wisdom, understanding, past records, party affiliation, credibility of claims made in the campaign, and the probable benefits anticipated from a candidate's victory. The convention responded by adopting a resolution which said that honest differences of opinions which were "intellectually defensible" could not be labeled bigotry, and commended the statement to the ALC membership for "their serious study and deliberate discussion."³

The Iowa District, however, dissented from the national ALC

¹Minutes, Committee on Social Trends, NLC, April 13-14, 1960, p. 3.

²ALC, Minutes (1960), p. 259.

³Ibid., pp. 259-260.

view when it met for its last convention in 1960. Its social action committee, which included a theological professor and a college chaplain, submitted a statement which the committee said was not intended for adoption, although the delegates adopted it. The statement contended that it was free from bigotry or malice, designed only to protect American liberties. It further said in part that the Roman Catholic Church was not in agreement with the American tradition of freedom and liberty, as exhibited by that church in certain countries. It then proceeded to say that

we fear the possibility, not that a Roman Catholic President would accept orders and directions from the hierarchy for the conduct of his office, but that deeply held religious convictions and loyalties might stand in the way of working whole-heartedly and in full good conscience in ways that would be in conflict with authoritarian and sectarian religious views.¹

In the Lutheran Standard, Reuss, Schramm, and to an extent also Lenski, attempted to counteract a vitriolic anti-Roman Catholic campaign, although the dissenting view was also expressed.²

Sensitivity to the possibility of favored relations with the Roman Catholic Church had been expressed before in the ALC. In 1946, the majority of districts voted to oppose the naming of an ambassador to the Vatican, as did the national convention in 1950. In 1951, the Board for Christian Social Action approved a statement expressing similar

¹Iowa District, ALC, Minutes (1960), pp. 47-48 and 74.

²See Carl F. Reuss, "For the Christian Who Goes to the Polls," October 1, 1960, p. 9; "International Issues in the '60 Campaign," October 15, 1960, pp. 10-11 and 16; and "That Religious Issue in The '60 Campaign," October 22, 1960, pp. 10-11; E. Schramm, "The Chief Issue?," October 22, 1960, p. 14; G. E. Lenski, "Washington Comments," August 6, 1960, p. 7; September 3, 1960, p. 7; and November 26, 1960, p. 7; and William Emch, "A Catholic for President," July 16, 1960, pp. 13-14; and "More on Catholic President," September 24, 1960, p. 15.

opinions.¹

Another action signaling a developing social consciousness was taken in 1950 when the social action board saw fit to release with its approval a statement on euthanasia. The document was based on a statement prepared by Dr. Reuss and adopted that same year by the American Lutheran Conference. The statement said that since God had a purpose for life, no individual should determine for himself or for another person when death should come. "Mercy killings" were rejected on the ground that such action violated the commandment not to kill.² Many questions were not raised. Why, for example, a mercy killing would violate the fifth commandment and therefore should be rejected, while war would not, did not form a part of the considerations expressed in the text.³

Marriage, Divorce, Planned Parenthood

A more exciting break-through in social thought came in the area of marriage, divorce, and planned parenthood. In fact, some of the work done in this area by Dr. Reuss must be included among the most signifi-

¹See Central District, ALC, Minutes (1946), pp. 60-61; Dakota District, ALC, ibid., p. 62; Eastern District, ALC, ibid., pp. 39 and 52-53; Illinois District, ALC, ibid., p. 55; Iowa District, ALC, ibid., p. 75; Northwestern District, ALC, ibid., p. 23; and Ohio District, ALC, ibid., p. 32. See also ALC, ibid. (1950), p. 395; Michigan District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 36; and Minutes, Board for Christian-Social Action, November 12-13, 1951, p. 2 and Appendix B.

²Ibid., July 24-25, 1950, p. 5 and Appendix B. See The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 52-53 for a slightly revised text. For example, the original asserted that God's will "always" prevails. The published version substituted the word "ultimately" for "always." See also, Minutes, Commission on Social Relations, the American Lutheran Conference, May 5, 1950, p. 2.

³For a related statement, see Minnesota District, ALC, Minutes (1948), p. 11.

cant pioneering efforts on the part of Lutherans in the field of social ethics. A part of Reuss' work was first channeled through the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference.¹

In 1948, the Board for Christian Social Action voted to circulate a statement on planned parenthood prepared by Dr. Reuss at the request of the Committee on Social Trends of the National Lutheran Council.² In the document, Reuss explained what he called the two-fold purposes of planned parenthood. These were "to enable parents, through methods of conception control, to space their children in the best interests of health and well-being of both the parents and the children," and "to enable childless couples, through methods of treatment for infertility, to have the children they so desire." Dr. Reuss endorsed planned parenthood and said the argument that contraception should be rejected because it was unnatural reminded him of arguments once used against hearing aids, anaesthesia, railroads, and airplanes.³

Fundamentally, Reuss argued, the planned parenthood controversy revolved around the purpose of sex in marriage. Limiting sex simply to the function of procreation left one's understanding of sex on an animal level, he contended. On the contrary, Reuss continued, sex was as much psychological and physiological, as much mental as physical, as much

¹See supra, pp. 211ff.

²Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, June 22-23, 1948, p. 2; and Minutes, Committee on Social Trends, NLC, November 13, 1947, p. 2.

³Reuss, Planned Parenthood, A Paper Prepared for Delivery at all Regional Meetings of the Lutheran Welfare Conference (Columbus), pp. 2 and 3. This was the paper circulated by the social action board as a result of the June, 1948 meeting. Letter from Carl F. Reuss, November 27, 1964. It is of interest to note that the ULCA in 1956 rejected homosexual relationships on the grounds they deviated from the natural. See ULCA, Minutes (1956), p. 1138.

spiritual as carnal. Sex, Reuss maintained, "gives tone and color and meaning to the whole of human living."¹

Reuss pointed out that man's cultural history was filled with attempts to prevent conception and to limit offspring. That which was new to our day, he said, was the availability of medically approved means for such control. To reject such methods, he suggested, was likely to deny the probable, primary purpose of sex in the human marriage, namely to cement the husband-wife unity. Reason and science were ways of understanding God's purpose in the world, and therefore should be used, Reuss maintained, as he abandoned the usual ALC stance of appealing to the Bible to support its social statements. Conception control ought not be used outside of marriage nor for what was described as the selfish reason of preventing children altogether, Reuss contended. At the same time, however, parents ought to be free without guilt, after consulting with physicians, to employ their best judgment in the limiting and spacing of their children for the total well-being of the family. Artificial insemination from the husband's semen was approved, while using semen from an anonymous source was questioned.²

Reuss' pamphlet formed the basis for a statement adopted in 1952 by the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference.³ This statement was referred to the member churches. In the ALC, the document found its way to the Board for Christian Social Action which in 1954 voted to refer it back to the American Lutheran Conference with its approval. Reuss reported to the ALC biennial convention that year

¹Reuss, Planned Parenthood, p. 5.

²Ibid., pp. 4-8.

³Letter from Carl F. Reuss, November 27, 1964.

that, on the basis of criticisms of the statement, revisions had been made and the statement retitled, "Responsible Parenthood."¹

As approved by the social action board in 1954, the document on responsible parenthood said that a couple normally expected children as a gracious gift from God. Every child, however, could justly expect love, care, and nurture in the home, it was said. Hence couples "may so plan and govern their sexual relations that any child born to their union will be desired both for itself and in relation to the time of its birth." It was further affirmed that "the means which the married pair uses to determine the number and spacing of the births of their children are a matter for them to decide with their own consciences, on the basis of competent medical advice, and in a sense of accountability to God." The document went on to say that "so long as it causes no harm to those involved, either immediately or over an extended period, none of the methods for controlling the number and spacing of the births of children has any special moral merit or demerit." While saying that unrestrained production of children without thought to realistic responsibilities might be as sinful as complete avoidance of parenthood, the document also warned against too rigorous a calculation concerning planning, and said that unexpected children ought to be welcomed. Abortion was permitted if necessary to save the mother's life. Artificial insemination was rejected if semen from someone other than the husband was used as such a practice was said to place in jeopardy the unity of the twain. Childless couples were urged to direct themselves to other areas

¹See Minutes, Commission on Social Relations, American Lutheran Conference, November 11, 1949; and April 29, 1952; Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, ALC, February 15-16, 1954, p. 4, and Appendix entitled, "Responsible Parenthood"; and ALC, Minutes (1954), p. 302.

of service.¹

When the social action board voted to revise the document for publication in 1960, it changed the wording from "avoid participation in artificial insemination" to "recognize there are dangers" in it when semen from a man other than the husband was used. Moreover, it said that under the latter circumstances, unity of the twain "may be jeopardized" rather than "is" in the original.² In the effort to forge a consensus on this subject, Dr. Reuss was the leader although others also addressed the issue.³ Despite the fact that the ALC national convention did not officially endorse the statement, Reuss' work was used not only to stimulate discussion of the issue in the ALC⁴ but also to serve as the basis for a statement adopted by Augustana in 1954.⁵

The ALC did, however, in 1956 formally adopt a statement in a related area, entitled, "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage." A broader view was taken than previously had been the case in Lutheran circles.⁶

¹Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 15-16, 1954, pp. 1-2 of Appendix entitled "Responsible Parenthood."

²See The Christian in His Social Living, p. 11.

³See for example E. Schramm, "The Church and Birth Control," Lutheran Standard, January 16, 1960, pp. 7 and 16; William Emch, "What Do We Teach on Birth Control?", ibid., July 16, 1955, p. 3; and G. E. Lenski, "A Delicate, Difficult Question," ibid., March 11, 1950, p. 6.

⁴Some districts recommended the study of Reuss' pamphlet to the congregations. See for example, Illinois District, ALC, Minutes (1955), p. 55; and Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1949), p. 36. Ohio adopted a resolution calling on the Ohio legislature to delete references to family planning from a bill on obscenity before the legislature. See Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1959), p. 47.

⁵See infra, p. 340.

⁶The ULCA also adopted a new statement on this subject in 1956 which reflected an even more comprehensive view. See infra, p. 443. For

The statement affirmed that God intended a marriage to continue throughout the lives of the persons involved, as a consequence of which "divorce violates God's pattern for marriage." The document nevertheless reflected a new position when it said that "the American Lutheran Church pleads with its members that they show charity and Christ's spirit of forgiveness toward divorced persons in the membership." While the statement further contended that divorced persons ought normally remain unmarried during the lifetime of either former spouse, it nevertheless counseled that "to deny a divorced person remarriage may subject him to greater temptations and sins than he, in his state of limited spiritual maturity, can resist." Remarriage of divorced persons might therefore "be permissable [sic]," it was said, provided such a person had repented of the sins and shortcomings which helped break up the first marriage.¹ Contrary to the expressed views of two districts, the statement further endorsed state marriage laws rather than an effort to get a standardized national marriage law.²

Race Relations ,

On the issue of race relations, the ALC record is spotty. Like

an example of previous attitudes, recall the difficulty of G. M. Bruce in getting a broader statement accepted by the American Lutheran Conference in the 1940's. It should be noted, however, that the ALC now drew on the conference efforts as well as earlier efforts by the NLC. See supra, pp. 63ff. In 1955, the social action board of the ALC adopted another statement in a further related area, entitled "Preparing the Child for the Social Order." See Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 8-9, 1955, p. 2 and The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 13-16.

¹ALC, Minutes (1956), pp. 319-323. See also Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, October 27-28, 1953; and February 8-9, 1955; and The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 16-21.

²ALC, Minutes (1956), p. 323. See also Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1948), pp. 34-36; and Texas District, ALC, ibid. (1947), p. 60.

most churches, the ALC's first attempts to provide leadership in this area were halting and incomplete. Also like most churches, the ALC had to receive a healthy prod from the judicial branch of the federal government before it moved to face the issue with all its ramifications.

In the statement on "Aims and Purposes" adopted at the 1948 convention, the ALC had referred in general terms to the treatment of the races, although no explicit references to segregation had been made.¹ The statement prepared by the Ohio District in 1945 had been more explicit in speaking of the unity of the human family and the equalitarianism involved in Paul's affirmation that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female.²

Meeting about five months after the Supreme Court's historic decision of 1954 to outlaw segregation in the public schools, the ALC national convention received from the Board for Christian Social Action a statement entitled "Segregation and Stratification." The statement was not adopted at that convention, although it was commended to "the thoughtful consideration and study of the pastors and congregations" of the ALC.³

Acknowledging the existence of segregation within the churches, the statement said that such a practice belied "the fundamental unity of the human race as God created it. The presence of segregation and stratification in the churches undermines the power inhering in the Gospel for uniting men through Christ in fellowship with the Father," it said. The statement continued:

¹See supra, pp. 243ff.

²See supra, p. 241.

³ALC, Minutes (1954), p. 323.

Wherever and whenever the churches help to foster race or class distinctions between people, and wherever and whenever they support attitudes of superiority or inferiority between persons, groups, or classes, they violate God's pattern. . . .

Christian churches unfailingly, therefore, must condemn segregation and stratification as the evil fruit of natural man's pride and his arrogant assumption of superiority over those who appear to be different from him.¹

The strength of this preliminary statement was qualified somewhat, however, by two considerations. First, the absence of explicit references to the practice of segregation outside the ecclesiastical structure itself. Second, the addition of the following paragraph which, if read with a certain mind set, could imply the church's support of a very subtle form of racial discrimination:

Yet, Christian churches must recognize in race and class feelings the operation of the "consciousness of kind" principle. The members of various races and classes feel an essential oneness and a common bond with one another. Such voluntary associations of people having kindred interests and experiences are a normal part of the social order.²

Moreover, the statement also observed that Christ, while working within the realities of the social structures of his day, "did not seek a leveling of the differences between races and classes."³ Such a statement appears excessive in view of the racial overtones involved in Christ's story of the Good Samaritan.

When the ALC biennial convention met in 1956, the statement "Segregation and Stratification" had been expanded and was adopted as an official church pronouncement, upon the recommendation of both the Board for Christian Social Action and the Board of American Missions.⁴ It

¹ALC, Minutes (1954), pp. 320-321.

²Ibid., p. 321.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. (1956), pp. 196-199. See also Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, February 1-2, 1956, Appendix B.

included the section from the 1954 statement and went on to draw some conclusions for the church's ecclesiastical policy. It was now explicitly stated that all congregations should practice an inclusive ministry in a neighborhood regardless of economic, racial, educational, or cultural backgrounds. Congregations practicing segregation were not excommunicated from the church, but district and synodical officials were instructed to counsel with them concerning their ministry. On the other hand, "compulsive action," as well as inaction, was warned against. Months or even years might be required, it was said, before the individual congregation would see clearly the path to travel. The resolution proceeded to call on the seminaries, colleges, periodicals, and parish education units of the church to provide the facts and assistance needed for the shaping of a Christian viewpoint to govern the lives of congregational members.¹

The call to patience and understanding, however, was tipped in the direction of the Lutheran segregationist rather than toward the one suffering the discrimination. Moreover, the addition to the 1954 statement of several paragraphs referring explicitly to ecclesiastical policy tended to suggest a limitation of the segregation ban to the church's own organizational functions.²

No further statement on this subject was prepared by the Board for Christian Social Action. In 1958, the National Lutheran Council adopted "A Christian Affirmation on Human Relations," which was sub-

¹ALC, Minutes (1956), pp. 197-199.

²The restriction of the statement to ecclesiastical concerns is also suggested by the new title, "Policy for Inter-Racial Ministry," given to the 1956 pronouncement. ALC, Minutes (1956), p. 199. See also The Christian in His Social Living, pp. 45ff.

mitted to the NLC annual meeting by the Committee on Social Trends, of which Dr. Reuss was a member. The statement was referred to the ALC districts for study by the social action board. When the ALC met for its national convention in the fall of 1958, the ALC Board of American Missions, acting upon a request of the NLC Division of American Missions, together with the Board of Christian Social Action recommended adoption of the affirmation. This statement, which was adopted by the ALC without revision,¹ spoke of the need to remove discrimination not only in areas of ecclesiastical policy but in such areas as housing, employment, education, and access to social welfare services as well.² Thus eventually the ALC explicitly extended its concern to areas of discrimination beyond the local church door.

Some references in district minutes to the race question during the early part of this period envisioned a segregated situation. The California District home missions committee reported in 1948 that First Church in Compton was providing a \$100 monthly subsidy to a Negro mission.³ The Northwestern District also announced the following year the establishment of a separate Negro mission.⁴ The most specific acceptance of segregation during this period, however, came from the Texas District. In 1946, District President E. A. Sagebiel contended that tension concerning race and nationality ought to disappear among Christians. He went so far as to say that

¹ALC, Minutes (1958), pp. 178 and 541.

²See supra, pp. 222ff.

³California District, ALC, Minutes (1948), p. 30.

⁴Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1949), p. 24.

with my whole heart I appeal to the convention to accept the teachings of Jesus in respect to the treatment of minorities, as our norm and guide in actual practice; to urge our pastors and lay delegates to have the right treatment of our minorities demonstrated in our homes and parishes.

In the very same address, however, he gave his support to a paternalistic pattern of segregation when he said:

Where their number in the respective communities is small, let the Latin American . . . be heartily welcomed into our services. The colored man should be assigned a dignified section of the church in which he should be perfectly at home. Where their number is larger for separate assembly let the entire physical equipment of the congregation be at their disposal at such times when the congregation may spare it.¹

Only a few districts took action concerning this question prior to the 1954 Supreme Court decision. Michigan called for a study of the race issue in 1950 and Minnesota in 1952. Ohio, in 1946, adopted a resolution admitting Negro pastors and congregations into full membership in the district.²

The most comprehensive statement of the issue, however, came from the Northwestern District. The leading spirit behind this district's action was a clergyman, E. C. Knorr, who had a Ph.D. in sociology and was serving as chairman of the department of sociology at Pacific Lutheran College in Parkland, Washington. He was a member of the district's social action committee which made several reports. These talked about the need to welcome minority groups into congregations, to get at correct biological and sociological data concerning the races, and criticized "restrictive covenants in real estate contracts." One report said that:

¹Texas District, ALC, Minutes (1946), p. 19.

²Michigan District, ALC, ibid. (1950), p. 46; Minnesota District, ALC, ibid. (1952), p. 30; and Ohio District, ALC, ibid. (1946), p. 36.

we must use our full influence in working toward equal opportunity for minority groups in housing, employment, community activities, use of recreational facilities, etc. Above all, we must break down prejudice within our congregations and make these folks feel wanted and at home within our Christian fellowship.¹

After the Supreme Court's decision regarding the public schools, there was a flurry of activity in the districts. Resolutions and statements referred more clearly and directly to the issue. Michigan's district president, Dr. Norman Mentor, noted in his report to the district in 1954 that the decision would inevitably create what he termed a "color" problem for some of the churches. "Surely, God is not a respecter of persons," Mentor said, adding that "in the spirit of our Master we dare not discriminate against persons of another color in our churches." He therefore urged the churches to practice an open door policy and to prepare themselves through education so that, should a congregation be confronted with a bi-racial situation, it might be "capable of the proper, Christian, God-pleasing solution . . ."² The court had forced the issue. The church now joined the summons, though frequently limiting itself to the realm of ecclesiastical policy.

The following year, the social action committee in Michigan sounded the note that the major task of the church was to educate whites to accept other races. The delegates endorsed a congregational "open door policy" only for those areas in which the colored population reached at least 50 per cent. Relocation of churches to the suburbs was opposed except in what was termed extreme emergency. Wherever "the

¹Northwestern District, ALC, Minutes (1950), pp. 39-40; and (1951), pp. 36-37 and 40.

²Michigan District, ALC, ibid. (1954), p. 23.

population and economic picture has deteriorated beyond the possibility of a full ministry," the committee report said, "and when merger with other congregations is impossible, the church should not feel obligated to provide additional financial support when other provision can be made for supplying the remaining souls with the means of grace."¹

The Northwestern District both denounced segregation and urged patience at its 1956 convention. Segregation, the social action report said, was the result of man's sin, not God's purpose. Nevertheless, the report added, the church could not ignore the "realities of the social structure" and should therefore be patient while the power of the word and the sacraments slowly changed the minds and hearts of people. Similar sentiments were incorporated into a convention resolution, thus again showing greater concern for the segregationist than the victim of such a practice.²

One of the most forthright actions by any district as related to integration after the Supreme Court decision was taken by the Texas District. In 1956, the convention delegates voted to say that "the Church is the conscience of the State and is in duty bound before its God to know, judge, and even execute what is right and to bear witness to the wheels of Divine Justice, in line with the Prophets of old," The district therefore proceeded to adopt another resolution which said:

WHEREAS, the problem of racial integration faces us in our schools and in other phases of social life, bringing possible tensions and a need for mature understanding of Christian love, and

WHEREAS, silence on social issues that face us as Christians implies an answer of indifference, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED: that we call upon the pastors and members of

¹Michigan District, ALC, Minutes (1955), pp. 47-52.

²Northwestern District, ALC, ibid. (1956), pp. 42-43 and 46.

our congregations to think, read, discuss and act, on the Christian answer to this problem in the light of Holy Scripture and with the help of the materials available from our Board for Christian Social Action, and that we request our District Committee on Social Action to again draw these and other resource material to the attention of all pastors and congregations (and auxiliaries), such material to include speakers from other races, so that the freedoms we enjoy may be a reality to all peoples, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that we make it unmistakably clear that in our congregations persons of different races who may attend our services are ever welcome.¹

When the Texas District met in 1957, the delegates approved a resolution declaring that "we go on record publicly opposed to the many devious methods and dilatory tactics employed to circumvent the Mandate of the Supreme Court" on the question of integration and that copies of the resolution be sent to Texas legislators. A year later, they voted to urge the congregations to study, "A Christian Affirmation on Human Relations," drawn up by the NLC.² California took similar action that year, as did the Eastern, Illinois, Iowa, and Northwestern districts. Eastern also voted to remind the congregations of the action taken at the 1956 ALC national convention ruling out the practice of segregation at the congregational level.³

Just as the Supreme Court decision concerning segregation in public schools seems to have activated concern in the ALC at both the district and national level, so also the decision seems to have affected the attitude toward segregation as expressed in the ALC's official church paper, Lutheran Standard. Immediately after World

¹Texas District, ALC, Minutes (1956), pp. 95-96.

²Ibid. (1957), p. 120; and (1958), p. 63.

³California District, ALC, ibid., p. 47; Eastern District, ALC, ibid., p. 79; Illinois District, ALC, ibid., p. 52; Iowa District, ALC, ibid., p. 92; and Northwestern District, ALC, ibid., p. 47. See also Eastern District, ALC, ibid. (1959), p. 36.

War II, the Rev. Gerhard E. Lenski wrote in his regular column about the request by Negroes for integration of the Washington, D.C. churches. Consequently, Lenski reported, the local federation of churches had proposed sponsoring one integrated church to stand as an example of what Christianity publicly proclaimed. Lenski expressed reservations concerning interracial experiments.¹ A few months later, he again commented on the mounting tension between whites and Negroes concerning integration. He expressed the view that "as Christians we are bound to feel for the colored people," and therefore he agreed one ought to speak out against injustice and on behalf of standards that were fair and right. On the other hand, he did not suggest a great willingness to adjust too many current views or practices when he wrote:

. . . if the colored people desire improvement in such matters, let them do something more than agitate, threaten, and put on pressure. As a social group let them deal with those of their own number who are socially unfit and who often represent the very dregs of society. Let the Washington Negro heed the advice of Booker T. Washington and make of himself a "useful, Christian person." The white man, no doubt, has often been most unfair to the colored man, but a worse enemy than the white man is the socially unclean and unfit colored man himself. Correction here may not solve the entire problem, but it will help matters greatly.²

After the Supreme Court decision, Lenski seems to have adopted a more charitable attitude toward the Negroes, although he criticized the court for not dealing realistically with the racial problem.³

The majority of articles on the subject of race to appear in the

¹"Washington Comments," Lutheran Standard, June 8, 1946, p. 5.

²Ibid., January 4, 1947, p. 4. For an expression of related opinions, see Lenski's same column for January 8, 1949, p. 6.

³See ibid., July 7, 1956, p. 9; and November 10, 1956, p. 8.

Lutheran Standard even prior to the Supreme Court decision, however, called for integration. Dr. Carl F. Reuss wrote in 1946 that color prejudice arose out of the white man's own insecurity, not from any inferior quality in the Negro. In 1949, he pointed out that discrimination was incongruous with past American ideals. He suggested that amicable racial relations could be solved only as men were "brought to Jesus Christ and . . . transformed through His redeeming grace . . ."¹ He did not suggest what had been wrong with grace since the arrival of the first boatload of Negroes in 1619 nor what the prospect of integration would be in a completely religiously heterogeneous society. Other articles also appeared on behalf of racial minorities.²

The first article to appear in the Standard on the racial question following the Supreme Court decision was written by Dr. Paul G. Kauper, a professor of law at the University of Michigan and a member of the ALC Board of Higher Education. Dr. Kauper traced the history of the legal status of Negroes in America from the Dred Scott decision to the Plessy vs. Ferguson case of 1896 where the court developed the separate but equal theory. He argued that the gospel did not operate on a segregated basis and therefore "earnest Christians must recognize the moral soundness of the recent Supreme Court decision and give it their support." He said that the decision ought to "jar the conscience" of

¹"Color Blind," Lutheran Standard, October 5, 1946, p. 5; and "Of One Blood God Made All Nations," ibid., February 19, 1949, pp. 4-5.

²Leonard Leikauf, "The Slavery of Race Hatred," ibid., April 22, 1950, pp. 5 and 8; Liston Pope, "A Revolution in Race Relations," ibid., February 9, 1952, pp. 6-7; and Ervin Krebs, "America's Neglected Millions," ibid., August 23, 1952, p. 6; "Right Here at Home," ibid., July 20, 1946, p. 5; and "Transfer of Negro Missions to NLC Increases Interest of Other Synods," ibid., June 12, 1954, p. 8. See also Henriette Lund, "Indians Are People Too," ibid., January 19, 1952, pp. 6-7; and James H. Robinson, "The World Is Looking at Our Race Relations," ibid., January 21, 1955, pp. 6-7.

the church into putting its own house in order. He continued:

Indeed, our Christian churches, standing as the custodians of the spiritual and moral heritage of the Christian faith, should have pioneered and led the way in combating attitudes, prejudices, and practices that cannot be reconciled with the principles we profess in the name of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Instead we have been content to accommodate our faith to inherited traditions and to let the law, custom, and culture patterns define the measure of the Negro's participation in our common life.¹

Dr. Kauper went on to say that condescension toward the Negro, tolerance of discrimination, as well as "facile rationalizations in order to appease our conscience in this matter--these are all symptoms of our common national sin in the handling of the race question."²

Reports now began appearing in the Standard about actions taken by pastors or congregations regarding the race question. Rev. Charles Klinksick, pastor of Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Detroit, resigned from his parish after 60 per cent of his congregation voted against accepting a Negro family into the church, despite a favorable recommendation on the question from the parish council. It was further reported in 1955 that forty ALC clergymen in the Detroit area had met and decided unanimously that a congregation ought to open its doors to all persons in a community. The group petitioned the Board for Christian Social Action to prepare a statement for guidance in the matter.³

The Rev. Robert Graetz, ALC clergyman serving a Negro parish in Montgomery, Alabama, described the bus boycott in that city and the poverty among the parishioners. He spoke of the abuses, discourtesies,

¹Paul G. Kauper, "Erasing the Color Line in Our Public Schools," Lutheran Standard, July 31, 1954, p. 13.

²Ibid.

³Wilfred Bockelman, "Negro Problem or White Problem?", ibid., June 11, 1955, p. 13. See also an unsigned article, "ALC Pastors of Detroit and Saginaw Discuss Church in Interracial Areas," ibid., p. 4.

and sometimes violence inflicted on the Negro, and wrote that "I have been working right along with my people in this fight for justice" despite the fact that the sheriff had picked him up early one morning in an effort to intimidate him. "I may even suffer violence. But I cannot minister to souls alone. My people also have bodies," he wrote.

". . . my people deserve the opportunity to live a decent life in this world, too."¹ The story of Graetz' participation in the bus boycott received much attention in the Standard and seems to have generated a number of articles. One issue of the Standard carried five articles on the race issue. Graetz' work was endorsed by synodical officials and the editor of the Standard, although the latter also once confessed he felt on occasion that the NAACP ought to admit some weaknesses on the part of the Negro as well as the white. Graetz reported that many southern whites were standing up to be counted and cited the action of the Texas District conventions as one indication of the trend.²

Dr. Martin Luther King wrote describing what he called the false sense of superiority exhibited by the segregator and said that the Negro had developed a new sense of dignity as the result of which he desired to achieve freedom and a recognition of that dignity. The two alternatives toward achieving this end were violence and anger, or non-violence

¹Robert Graetz, "Southern Accent on Growth," Lutheran Standard, February 18, 1956, pp. 13 and 15.

²See Richard P. Kleeman, "White Leader in a Negro Cause," ibid., pp. 14-15; James Darnell, "Southern Accent on Youth," ibid., pp. 12 and 15; Robert Graetz, "Into the Lion's Mouth in Race Relations," ibid., April 28, 1956, pp. 8-9; Graetz, "The Crisis in Race Relations," ibid., February 8, 1958, pp. 9 and 14; Graetz, "It Can Be Done," ibid., February 21, 1959, pp. 12-14 and 30; and Graetz, "It Must Be Done," ibid., February 28, 1959, pp. 8-11; Richard P. Fenske, "Love, Fear and the Race Problem," ibid., April 21, 1956, pp. 3 and 7; and [E. Schramm], "The Cradle Rocks," ibid., February 18, 1956, p. 11; and "Races Are Here To Stay," February 2, 1957, p. 15.

after the ordeal of Gandhi, he said. Dr. King of course called for non-violence as a way to overcome evil with good, or rising to love the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed the person does. He assumed, he said, that the universe was on the side of justice. From other segments of the church, protests came against the seeming impossibility of white middle-class protestantism to extricate itself from its cultural bondage and to act in a singularly Christian manner. Dr. Kauper's judgment that the court decision ought to jar the conscience of the church seems to have been correct. The impact of the ecumenical movement was felt also as the Standard, like the other Lutheran periodicals after 1950, opened its pages to such non-Lutherans as Martin Luther King and Liston Pope.¹ In the entire process, the ALC was proceeding to help shape the public conscience respecting this matter. Her sense of social responsibility was thus both developing and broadening.

Social Action in Retrospect

The actions of the Board for Christian Social Action during this period covered a variety of topics and were related to a variety of social institutions. When the board looked backward at its final meeting in 1960 prior to merger, it could justly note some significant changes for which it had been largely responsible.

In his final report, Dr. Reuss observed that "the present ALC has accepted the conviction that a person's Christian faith must be manifested in his decisions and actions in family, community, social, political and economic life." Moreover, he said, the ALC had also

¹"The Crisis in Race Relations," Lutheran Standard, February 8, 1958, pp. 8 and 10. See also David F. Conrad, "To the Problems of Race: Only One Answer," ibid., January 9, 1957, pp. 8-9; Paul Bergdall, "Can We Ask To Be Excused?," ibid., February 4, 1956, pp. 16-17; Alf M. Kraabel, "Who Is My Neighbor?," ibid., July 11, 1959, p. 3; and Liston Pope, "Christian Mandate on Race Relations," ibid., February 13, 1960, pp. 12-13.

"accepted the propriety of an official agency of the Church expressing its views on current issues as a means for stimulating thinking and promoting discussion among members of the Church."¹ The sense of social responsibility in the ALC had, as a matter of fact, thus been both deepened and broadened. The old quietism had been silenced and a new posture assumed.

All this had been accomplished despite the absence of a significant theological reorientation in the ALC. The absence of this theological reworking was often reflected in the statements adopted or referred by the Board for Christian Social Action. There was a frequent tendency in those pronouncements to select Bible passages as props for the argument without discussing the many diverse biblical themes concerning the question, nor relating those to a more comprehensive scheme of biblical, historical, systematic, or philosophical ethics. The bridge between theology and social ethics, while formally spanned by biblical quotations, was therefore normally weakly held together in a fairly undeveloped fashion. The doctrine of the word reflected by such a practice was a rather wooden and mechanical one. A high providentialism and moral responsibility were frequently meshed, although not too carefully as, for example, the references to God's providence and man's stewardship responsibility indicated.

These and related situations occurred in the ALC because the breadth of moral sensitivity expressed by Reuss and the social action board, as well as by other actions surfacing in various sections of the ALC, were far ahead of the theological developments within that com -

¹Minutes, Board for Christian Social Action, November 19, 1960, pp. 2-3.

munion. In fact, as has been noted, the official theological leadership of the ALC remained fairly aloof from the social action movement.

This lack of renewed theological undergirding was reflected in the work of the Board for Christian Social Action. To be sure, the old quietism was set aside through the continuous prodding of the board to reject certain aspects of the traditional understanding of the relationship between church and state and to assert a new one. This was accomplished simply by quoting a different set of Bible verses. For example, Acts 5:29 now took precedence over Romans 13. This maneuver enabled the social action board to work within the fairly traditional framework of ALC theology, while at the same time drawing conclusions different from previous views concerning man's responsibility. As a tactical procedure, it was perhaps necessary at this stage in the ALC's history. The weakness in the ALC effort, therefore, points beyond the Board for Christian Social Action to the theological seminaries for their failure to deliver. Despite the need for a broader theological framework in which to operate, a broader social consciousness and responsibility had been developed. The ALC had moved to new ground.

In the effort to move the ALC toward a broader moral sensitivity and a developing social consciousness and responsibility, social and ecumenical influences have been noted. Within the ALC, Dr. Carl F. Reuss, a layman, played the key role. As the old ALC merged to form the new ALC, another challenge lay ahead for Reuss in that he had been named executive secretary of The ALC's new Commission on Research and Social Action. The old ALC had tried to give the new commission the status of a board in the new church, but failed.¹ The ELC and the UELC, which had had no comparable

¹See for example, George S. Schultz, "Social and Economic Philosophies," Lutheran Standard, August 25, 1956, p. 14.

commission, would need to be led in new directions in order to assimilate what had already been accomplished in the old ALC.

CHAPTER VIII
THE AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Introduction

The Augustana Lutheran Church had shifted ground much more sharply concerning social issues than had either of her two main partners in the American Lutheran Conference, namely the American Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Augustana had been Americanized prior to World War II. She had been greatly disturbed by the economic depression of the 30's and the eventual outbreak of a new global war. She had been influenced by the ecumenical movement and by new developments in protestant theology. This influence had burst in upon the church with a rather powerful surge when several new faculty were added to Augustana's only theological seminary early in the 30's. These and other teachers continued to educate the church for a greater social responsibility throughout both periods under study.

Because of these factors, the Augustana Church entered the post World War II era in a state of sensitivity to social issues in advance of all other churches studied except the ULCA and she retained that position, although the ALC gave her greater competition during this period studied than during the first one.

True to the times and to her heritage, Augustana focused major attention on the question of war. She also spoke about race relations, labor, individual liberty, marriage and sex--in short, the kind of things other Lutherans were also looking at carefully. During the process, two

key persons were seeking to give Augustana theological direction for the expression of this consciousness.

The ALC Board for Christian Social Action had, under the leadership of Carl Reuss, issued statements on a wider range of topics than were developed in Augustana. Despite that fact, more attention was given to social matters at Augustana conventions and more articles on social issues were written for Augustana journals than was the case in the ALC. Thus it appears that a concern for social responsibility was more widespread in Augustana than in the ALC and that the church body as a whole took more advanced positions.

Augustana, like the ALC, sometimes used statements examined or prepared by committees of the American Lutheran Conference and the National Lutheran Council, whereas the ULCA usually developed statements more independently. Despite this common interplay, Augustana during this fifteen-year period reflected her own special tone, pace, and stance concerning social issues as the subsequent material will show.

Two Directions in a Theology for Social Responsibility

One of the features which distinguished the work in the Augustana Lutheran Church from the activity in the American Lutheran Church with respect to the developing of a social consciousness was that the former sought to develop a new ethic on which to base social action. Two men were of primary importance in this effort. They were A. D. Mattson, professor of Christian Ethics at Augustana Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois, and Edgar M. Carlson, president of Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.

Dr. Mattson became a professor at Augustana Seminary in 1931 and continued to serve in that capacity into the 1960's. Thus most of the

clergymen in the Augustana Synod for more than thirty years studied Christian ethics under Mattson.¹ He therefore continued also in the post-war period to exercise the greatest influence of any man within the Augustana Synod concerning the growth of a social consciousness. In addition to his work at the seminary, Dr. Mattson continued to serve as a member and chairman of Augustana's Commission on Morals and Social Problems. Through this official position, he helped shape many of the statements adopted during this period by Augustana at her national conventions.

The theological position of Dr. Mattson did not undergo significant change during the entire thirty-year period.² While a student at college and seminary, Mattson became influenced by Walter Rauschenbusch. This confrontation was further extended while working for his master's degree at Yale.³ The idea of the kingdom of God therefore stands at the center of Mattson's theology. He understood this to be a divine kingdom with implications for human society. The kingdom of God was the realm of human history in which God was active accomplishing his purposes. It was the "energy of God pressing in upon human affairs." It was a constant

¹In an interview on July 25, 1963 with Dr. K. E. Mattson, president of Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, it was said that of the approximately 1,400 Augustana clergy, about 1,100 had studied under A. D. Mattson.

²Dr. Mattson confirmed this judgment by his own testimony in the preface to his last book, where he said the publication was rearranged repetition of his earlier works. See Mattson, The Social Responsibility of Christians (Philadelphia, 1960), preface, p. vii. For a brief summary of his previously articulated views, see supra, pp. 117ff.

³Later, Mattson became influenced by Archbishop Soderblom and the Life and Work Movement. During the academic year 1928-29, Dr. Mattson taught at Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey, where, in teaching the Old Testament, he was confronted with the ethical dimensions of the prophets. Interview with Dr. K. E. Mattson, July 25, 1963. See also preface to The Social Responsibility of Christians.

coming of God's presence into all areas of human activity for the purpose of establishing his rule.¹ Mattson therefore repeatedly said that "we must insist that God be allowed to rule in the public as well as in the private affairs of men." He rejected both a quietistic withdrawal from the world as well as an activistic humanism, and contended that his position stood in the tradition of Martin Luther.² Like Rauschenbusch, Mattson claimed a strong biblical basis for the kingdom idea by citing the Old Testament prophets and Jesus.³

Love was to be expressed not only to God, but toward one's fellowmen as well as toward oneself. If self were not of significant value, Mattson argued, the giving of self would be worthless. Hence he defended a responsible self-affirmation that found expression in the serving of God and people. One served others through friendship, compassion, charity, and justice.⁴

From this base of the rule of God and the call to love which would eventuate in justice, Mattson moved out into the arena of social questions. He criticized capitalism on the ground that the profit motive was "not in the list of Christian virtues." Sounding like the social gospel crusaders from whom he received much of his insight, Mattson argued:

¹A. D. Mattson, Christian Social Consciousness (Rock Island, 1953), pp. 106-108. See also Christian Ethics (2d ed. rev.; Rock Island, 1947), pp. 175-188; and The Social Responsibility of Christians, pp. 46-53.

²Christian Ethics, p. 55 and pp. 51ff. See also The Social Responsibility of Christians, pp. 39-43.

³Christian Ethics, pp. 174ff.; and Christian Social Consciousness, pp. 60-108. See also The Social Responsibility of Christians, pp. 24ff.

⁴Christian Ethics, pp. 203ff.

Wasting natural resources, the promotion of scarcity in the field of consumption in order to keep up or raise prices, the adulteration of foods, child labor or the exploitation of women in industry, in the interests of profits, can never be reconciled with the Christian ethical outlook on life. Christianity would emphasize that industry was made for man, not man for industry and that we should seek the dominance of the motive of service over the motive of gain.¹

Not only did he attack the profit motive, he also attacked competition in the style of a Rauschenbusch. "Competition often represses good will and calls forth jealousy and selfishness and denies the spirit of brotherhood," Mattson wrote. Competition often tempted toward dishonesty and adulteration, he said, as well as tending to drive out its rival and to lead to monopoly. Therefore competition also was "not among the Christian virtues," he concluded. Christian motives, he asserted in good social gospel tradition, were service and cooperation.²

In addition to the profit motive and competition, Mattson also attacked capitalism on the ground that wealth tended to concentrate in the hands of a few people. Moreover, he said, capitalism created class distinctions and exalted property values above human values. Therefore, like Rauschenbusch, Mattson endorsed the consumer cooperative movement as "at least a partial answer, from the Christian point of view, to the problems which capitalism poses." He even suggested that there might be areas where "some form of Socialism is necessary in order to promote the welfare of people." He pointed to the public schools, the postal system, and municipal water works as examples.³

¹Mattson, Christian Social Consciousness, pp. 175 and 174. See also Christian Ethics, pp. 313ff.

²Christian Social Consciousness, pp. 176-177. See also Christian Ethics, pp. 315ff.

³Christian Social Consciousness, pp. 182 and 188. See also Christian Ethics, pp. 315ff.

Parallel to Mattson's attack on capitalism ran his espousal of the cause of laboring men. Dr. Mattson discussed the difficulties which had confronted laboring men in America in their effort to organize, beginning in 1806 when a group of shoemakers in Philadelphia were convicted of "a conspiracy to raise wages" through a "combination." Mattson contended that failure to understand the labor movement had contributed to much unwarranted criticism and opposition to it and argued that the church "should be interested in social justice and in the labor movement in so far as it promotes justice." He urged that the church give renewed emphasis to the doctrine of work as a vocation conducted in the sight of God, that courses in industrial relations be introduced into congregations as well as in the colleges and seminaries of the church, that clergymen become acquainted with union officials and attend their meetings, that the church set its own house in order with respect to its hired employees, and that all churchmen keep themselves informed concerning new legislation in the labor field.¹

With respect to other economic questions, Dr. Mattson cited John Frederick Oberlin as an ideal rural parish pastor. Mattson also observed that Christianity did not quarrel with the communistic goal of a classless society, although he admitted that "Christian ethics does not demand the abolition of private property." Conflict with communism came not at the point of this goal, Mattson argued, but rather at the point where

¹Christian Social Consciousness, pp. 191-209. See also Christian Ethics, pp. 321-325. Dr. Mattson's interest in the labor movement is also reflected by the fact that he served for a few years as one of two chaplains for the Quad-City Federation of Labor, involving representatives from Rock Island, Moline, and East Moline, Illinois, and Davenport, Iowa. In 1962, Dr. Mattson was honored by the Federation at a testimonial dinner attended by 500 laborers at which Senator Douglas of Illinois spoke. Interview with Dr. K. E. Mattson, July 25, 1963.

communism denied the reality of what he called the supernatural.¹

Turning to the question of the relationship between church and state, Mattson wrote that he did not seek the establishment of some kind of theocracy nor the establishment of ecclesiastical power over the state. Surely he did not want a state church, he said. At the same time, he continued, he did seek to extend the influence of the spirit of Christ into the affairs of state. Like the social gospel leaders, Mattson expressed preference for a democratic government because of its respect for human personality. Popular sovereignty implied that people were more important than property, he said. While he affirmed that the state was a divinely established institution, he also approved the Oxford Life and Work statement which he quoted to the effect that the state stood under both the authority and judgment of God.²

Dr. Mattson rejected war as "antithetical to the spirit of Christianity," inasmuch as the latter could not sanction such causes of war as nationalism and economic self-interest. He contended that war could best be averted by seeking a more just distribution of wealth, by establishing what he termed a more generous attitude toward race and population problems, and by expressing greater sympathy for the needs and aspirations of other people.³

The other major social area to receive attention from Dr. Mattson was that of marriage and the home. Asserting that monogamy justified

¹Mattson, Christian Social Consciousness, pp. 215ff. and 241ff. See also Christian Ethics, pp. 304ff.

²Christian Social Consciousness, pp. 232-257. See also Christian Ethics, pp. 300-310 and 343-358; and The Social Responsibility of Christians, pp. 85ff. and 100ff.

³Christian Ethics, pp. 327-332.

itself psychologically, biologically, and historically, and had New Testament support, Dr. Mattson preached the usual position that the two partners of a marriage were intended to be comrades for life. He nevertheless also argued for a more understanding, less legalistic view of divorce, saying that the New Testament was not a legal code. Some of the pros and cons concerning birth control were briefly discussed, but Mattson refused to endorse either side, saying that the question needed further study.¹

Dr. Mattson's position, while relying heavily on social gospel insights, did not reflect a severe modification of God's sovereignty nor an inordinately high estimate of man's capacities. Dr. Mattson affirmed consistently throughout this period that man was basically sinful and in need of redemption, as Rauschenbusch had also done, and that all of man's actions fell short of perfection and stood under the judgment of God. He avoided identifying the kingdom of God too closely with certain specific social institutions. He did, however, endorse such social gospel supported institutions as democracy and cooperatives. At the same time, he placed a fairly heavy confidence in the possibility for the service motive in man's life to pull him out of such entrenchments as war and competitive capitalism. Mattson therefore reflected the social gospel romantic tendency at this point.

It could be said that Mattson held a position somewhat akin to Stuckenberg,² to whom the former made no conscious references. Like Stuckenberg, Mattson attempted to retain certain traditional Lutheran emphases, such as the basic sinfulness of man, the need for conversion

¹Christian Ethics, pp. 280-299.

²See supra, pp. 32ff.

and redemption of the individual through Christ, and the ultimate expression of God's sovereignty in history. At the same time, Mattson, as Stuckenberg had done before him, modified traditional theology by adopting such themes as the kingdom of God, the corporate sinfulness of man, and the extension of sin and redemption to social institutions.

The contribution of Mattson's position was first, that he recognized a need to alter the scheme for Lutheran social ethics, and second, that he succeeded in doing at least partially what he set out to do, namely to arouse the Augustana Church to a greater social concern and responsibility. Moreover, he was able to tap sufficient biblical support in the prophets and the gospels for his emphasis on the kingdom of God to give him a hearing in his church. An appeal to any other authority would have failed. By suggesting the theme of the kingdom of God, Mattson was presenting to the Augustana Synod a new framework within which to think and act concerning social issues. And finally, by extending the concepts of sin and redemption to corporate groups and social institutions, Mattson broke the back of a quietism which rested on an extreme individualism at this point.

Despite this contribution, however, Mattson's position lacked comprehensiveness and cohesiveness. He never developed as sophisticated and schematized a presentation as that of a Rauschenbusch. In fact, Mattson did not really develop after his early flowering years. This allowed him to deal with complicated questions in a rather easy manner and to move rather quickly from his understanding of love, service, and freedom, to solutions for the problems of the day. To suggest, for example, that war could be averted in part by the expression of a greater sympathy for the needs and desires of other nations may have indicated in

a very general manner the direction in which a country's concern for peace ought to go. The suggestion nevertheless looked a bit naked, weak, and youthfully romantic when placed alongside the more harsh and cruel realities of national self interest and the temptations involved in both subtle and overt forms of imperialism. Despite these factors, however, Dr. Mattson did succeed in helping the Augustana Synod to move into the social arena with a partially revised theological viewpoint.

The other man to suggest some theological motifs for ethics was Dr. Edgar Carlson. His most comprehensive treatment of this particular subject appeared in his book, The Church and the Public Conscience published in 1956. Dr. Carlson reflected the influence of Swedish Luther motif research, especially that of Gustav Aulen. The Swedish theologian had given special attention to such themes in Luther as law and gospel, love, the two kingdoms, and vocation. From these motifs the conclusion was drawn that a responsible Christian ethic could be derived from Luther. Carlson shared this premise.¹

Dr. Carlson began his work on the public conscience with the assertion that

for the Christian, a major source of moral insight must be the revealed and written law as encountered in the Scriptures to which he gives adherence. But beyond this is the embodiment

¹In an earlier volume, entitled The Reinterpretation of Luther (Philadelphia, 1948), Carlson attempted to summarize major parts of Swedish Reformation motif research as it related to Luther. Within ten years, key works of most of the Swedish theologians to whom Carlson referred were translated into English and published in America. See for example such works as Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, trans. Philip Watson (Philadelphia, 1953); Gustaf Aulen, Church, Law and Society (New York, 1948); Einar Billing, Our Calling, trans. Conrad Bergendoff (Rock Island, 1955); and Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia, 1957).

of that law in social institutions and structures which he encounters in the world about him.¹

Dr. Carlson argued for the existence of divinely established structures in society by suggesting that these structures represented a certain givenness in the nature of the world. He asserted, for example, that there was a "biological necessity for some kind of family existence to assure the preservation of life and the perpetuation of the race." He maintained that while there can be forms of family organization different from that which exists in the western world, it was nevertheless the case that "some sort of family existence is inherent in the very nature of man."²

Carlson made similar assertions regarding the realms of economics, government, and education. He argued that "hunger imposes the need for productivity" and therefore the need for some kind of economic arrangement. Similarly he contended that "the need for order is inherent in the nature of community" as the consequence of which government was necessary. Moreover, because "the parent-child relationship makes imperative some transfer of experience and insight from the older to the younger . . .", some form of educational process also was necessary, he contended.³

These structures in society, Carlson maintained, reflected the presence of a fundamental law in the universe which was inherent in the

¹Edgar Carlson, The Church and the Public Conscience (Philadelphia, 1956), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 21.

³Ibid., pp. 21-22. Carlson expressed the same idea in an address to the Third Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation meeting in Minneapolis in 1957. See Carl E. Lund-Quist (ed.), The Proceedings of the Third Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (Minneapolis, 1957), p. 68.

very concept of creation. Yet that law was not a natural law which could be apprehended by reason on the basis of which universal justice could be founded, he said. On the contrary, he observed,

there does not in fact seem to be any body of natural law which so commends itself to the reason of man that it can become a universally acceptable basis for judgment, regardless of cultural heritage, social custom, and considerations of self-interest.

The radical perversion of man's egocentricity, Carlson continued, made it impossible for human reason to apprehend such a law. Moreover, he argued that historically natural law had issued in natural rights which came to be derived from the dignity and worth of man rather than from a law which in some sense was the law of God.¹

The concept of the law of creation was different from natural law in that the former was not independent from the special revelation of God found in Scripture, Carlson said. In fact, he argued that the law of creation was identical with the Ten Commandments and the law of love in Christ. In making these assertions, Carlson reflected the influence of the Swedish theologian Gustav Aulen.² Carlson expressed the idea in this manner:

The law that is inherent in creation is not a different law from that which has been enunciated in the Ten Commandments, nor is it a different law from that which received its full revelation in Jesus Christ. There is only one law--the law of God. The "new commandment" of which Jesus spoke is also the "old commandment" which was from the beginning. It is the law of love, which according to Jesus is the sum and substance of the Ten Commandments, and which is also the law of creation. Only the church knows that this is so. The state has no resources independently of the church through which this knowledge can be gained.

¹The Church and the Public Conscience, pp. 28 and 68-69.

²See Gustav Aulen, Church, Law and Society, especially pp. 56ff. Carlson expressed his indebtedness to Aulen earlier in an article entitled, "Can the State Be Christian?", Augustana Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1947), p. 53.

Only the church knows this fact because only the church knows the Law-giver through Jesus Christ, Carlson asserted.¹

Because only the church had such insight, it had the responsibility to proclaim that law to the state, the home, the school, and the economic community, Carlson maintained. This responsibility involved helping to guard against deception on the part of the state by providing both citizens and lawmakers with all the relevant information about a given issue. This responsibility also involved making clear to the state that it was subject to a single sovereign, namely the Father of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Protestant orthodoxy had failed with respect to the latter point by surrendering the domain of created orders to some law of nature for which the church had no responsibility, Carlson maintained. In actuality, however, God ruled over the entire world, including both church and state, Carlson said, by asserting his influence through two regimes. Following Luther's lead, Carlson spoke of these regimes as the kingdom on the right and the kingdom on the left. God exerted his dominion in the two realms by two different means, Carlson contended. In the kingdom on the right, God exercised his dominion directly through his word. In the kingdom on the left, Carlson argued, "God acts through human instruments in establishing his dominion. Any secular authority is part of the created order and as such it is subject to the Creator. It has only sub-let authority, . . ."²

By so arguing, Carlson moved to stifle charges that he was creating autonomous orders in society. All orders were subject to God. Every man, in whatever order he found himself, Carlson continued, was

¹The Church and the Public Conscience, p. 68.

²Ibid., pp. 28-32.

subject to God, wholly dependent upon him and wholly responsible to him. This was the case in part, he said, because "it is also an intrinsic part of this whole pattern of ideas that man is called to serve in one of the stations involved in the social structure." According to Luther, Carlson argued, men and women from all walks of life, with the possible exception of monks, "had their distinctive and socially important roles to fill. The opportunity for mutual helpfulness afforded by this inter-relatedness of assigned tasks constituted the primary channel for fulfilling the law of love."¹ This calling, Carlson suggested, was an extension of the law of creation, not of the gospel. It thus extended to all men as God moved through coercion and duty to assert his dominion. Inasmuch as even the new man in Christ remained a sinner, Carlson said, the calling also remained as a discipline to assure service to one's fellowmen whether the Christian felt so inclined or not.²

This calling within the created orders, Carlson maintained, was an instrument through which God established dominion. In fact, he asserted, "all the orders, offices, and stations are 'masks of God' . . . through which God approaches man whom he would bring into the saving fellowship of submission and trust." Thus he continued:

What we have been saying is that the church must be concerned about peace, justice, health, hunger, honesty, and whatever other social problem or virtue one may bring forth, because it is the instrument through which men can be brought into fellowship with God. . . . Thus the police officer, the judge, the lawmaker, the

¹The Church and the Public Conscience, pp. 32-33. Carlson had earlier protested blaming Luther for the modern secularized state. In 1946 he wrote that Luther rejected the idea government was a law unto itself. Moreover, Carlson pointed out that the devil also could affect both regimes. See his article, "Luther's Conception of Government," Church History, XVII (December, 1946), pp. 259-270.

²The Church and the Public Conscience, pp. 53-58.

teacher, the parent, the foreman, and all who are related to the establishment of true order in society, in so far as they fulfill their true function, are agents of God. In confronting them one is confronting God's law concretely.¹

Carlson then proceeded to speak of the inter-relatedness of the two regimes. By virtue of this inter-relatedness, the state was to maintain order and justice through the use of coercion to the end that men would confront the law of God in their earthly environment. On the other hand, the church was not to allow itself to become isolated from or indifferent to the created orders. On the contrary, it was with respect to a true perspective of justice on the part of the state that the church's responsibility to the state became most clearly evident, Carlson wrote. It was the task of the church, Carlson asserted to

declare and interpret the content of the law by which also the state is bound, and it must create a sufficient consensus of moral judgment in support of that law to make it the definition of right on the basis of which the state can be expected to function. The church is the custodian of the law as well as the gospel.²

As custodian, "the church must be keenly aware of both injustice and pretensions to grandeur within the secular orders," Carlson argued, in sounding an Aulen keynote. Thus it was necessary for the church constantly to help the orders gain a proper perspective of justice.³

While asserting the church's responsibility to help foster a proper perspective of justice, however, Carlson seems to have felt the state had a primary concern for order and retributive justice rather than for a justice pertaining to man's general welfare. This was particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that the law of creation as reflected in

¹Carlson, The Church and the Public Conscience, pp. 64-66.

²Ibid., pp. 67-68.

³Ibid., p. 74. See also Aulen, Church, Law and Society, pp. 37 and 98.

the created orders was said ultimately to be the law of love. This law of love was to be translated into the arena of politics and social action according to the axiom Aulen had suggested in his phrase "genuine concern for one's neighbor."¹ Despite this understanding of the law of love, however, Carlson questioned the divine sanction of such items as health laws, unemployment insurance, social security, minimum wages, maximum hours of employment, and compulsory school attendance, even though he granted these items might be understood at least initially to represent concern for one's neighbor. Carlson wrote:

A question of considerable importance may here be in order. Does the divine sanction which the state enjoys as the instrument through which justice is to be enforced apply also to the state as the instrument through which men seek to assure their general well-being? Does the state have the same divine right and directive to enforce unemployment insurance that it has to punish theft? Does it have the same authority to force sixteen-year-olds to go to school that it has to imprison kidnappers? Are price supports, restricted acreages, the ever normal granary, as clearly included in the category of political concern in support of which coercion is sanctioned by divine decree, as the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? It is not altogether self-evident that this is so, . . .

. In such areas as those referred to above, it is much more clear that government is acting under a mandate from its citizenry than it is that it is acting under a directive from God. This is not necessarily to condemn or even to criticize the use of government in meeting these common concerns. It is, however, to point out that a hazard is involved which calls for careful scrutiny from the side of the church. The use of coercion by the state is something of divine origin. It does not follow that it may be used with the same inherent right in every area which the citizens of a democracy may agree to handle together.²

In other words, it would appear that the justice for which the state was to be concerned and on behalf of which it had divine sanction to use coercion, was chiefly a retributive justice rather than a justice concerned with such matters as equality of opportunity or economic well-

¹Quoted in The Church and the Public Conscience, p. 72.

²Carlson, ibid., pp. 76-77.

being.¹

At another point of contemporary social development, Dr. Carlson also expressed reservations. His concern centered about what he called the integration of the functions of the social structures "around the political elements in the total pattern." Carlson maintained that "to assert the divine origin of the orders of society is to assert that each of them has a God-given function which is not to be usurped by any other." Merging of functions not only involved risks but threatened the destruction of the social fabric as well, he warned.²

Dr. Carlson reasserted that it was at the point of law rather than gospel that the church's responsibility to society was to be expressed. To try to apply the gospel to the state would be to change the gospel into law. The gospel was not without its influence on the state, Carlson maintained, but the good news exerted its influence only indirectly. This was the case because the gospel was addressed only to concrete, individual people, he said, adding that "forgiveness can never be given en masse." Addressed to individuals, the gospel exercised a dynamic influence on the personal conscience, he suggested, and in this manner left its indirect impact upon the state. This was the case, Carlson said, because the re-orientation toward God which the gospel effected, was "the seed out of which humility and contrition, an uncoerced concern for the welfare of others, a genuine and unforced fellowship among men,

¹Carlson gave greater emphasis to justice as a function of the state in an article published nine years earlier. In the latter, Carlson warned against the possibility that the state could use its power for demonic purposes and strongly underlined the need of the church to use the law of love as a critique for every program of action undertaken by government. See "Can the State Be Christian?", Augustana Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1947), pp. 53-59.

²The Church and the Public Conscience, pp. 78-79.

and all the Christian virtues come forth." In stating that idea, however, Carlson pointed out that he did not wish to imply that the solution to all problems was to convert every person. Sin remained in converts, Carlson argued, even though the gospel gave man the mercy and possibility to transcend his egocentricity in a limited way.¹

Despite this limitation on man's perfectability and the perfectness of his solutions to problems, and despite the fact that Christians might not see their way out of problems in terms of historical possibilities, man could still give himself to working for better alternatives, Carlson argued, because of the eschatological hope of fulfillment beyond history. Thus, he continued:

The conviction that one's efforts can be fruitful rests ultimately on an eschatological premise. That is, it is a conviction that the outcome of history is not fortuitous and its course is not capricious. It has a destiny to which we are in some measure responsible but about which we have not been consulted. We can assume either the role of rebel or of willing instrument in relation to it. To the extent that we are instruments of that destiny we may have the confidence that the universe supports us. At least the net effect of the forces that are at work in the world is in favor of the purposes to which we have committed ourselves. This sort of conviction about the outcome seems to most Americans an intrinsic element in a working faith.²

The contribution of Dr. Carlson stands apart from other contributions in that he attempted to rest his case for social responsibility on the category of law. This factor, together with his realistic appraisal of the continued power of sin in Christian lives, tended to leave him with some suspicions about an ethic focused exclusively on either gratitude or intent.³ The "ought" was not removed from his consideration

¹The Church and the Public Conscience, pp. 80-81 and 83.

²Ibid., p. 94.

³See for example his discussion in ibid., pp. 19-20.

of ethics. Perfectionism was ruled out. There was also no explicit identification of Christian norms with either a particular individual act or with a particular set of historical institutions. Thus legalism was avoided, although duty and obligation remained as Christian categories. The latter were to be applied not only to private and personal relations but to public and social relations as well. Thus Carlson expressed a broadened social concern as Mattson had done. In doing so, Carlson contributed to a developing social responsibility within the Augustana Lutheran Church. The church had responsibilities to the institutions of society primarily because of the church's special insight into the law. Such a position helped militate against the older, although dying, American Lutheran quietism.

Nevertheless, Carlson's work must also be regarded as preliminary in the American Lutheran quest for a new social ethic. A number of questions or problems remained to be worked out. For example, it is not altogether clear from a study of creation that the state, the family, economics, and education are divinely established structures. Carlson conceded this point by saying that the structures could not be apprehended by reason. He even went so far as to deny natural law by arguing that no natural law seemed to have commended itself universally to the mind of man to form a basis for the making of moral judgments. It seems a bit awkward to argue from nature while denying natural law. It is similarly not altogether clear, even for a person within the church, that the so-called law of creation is identical with the decalog and that the two in turn are identical with Christ's law of love. Moreover, while repudiating natural law, Carlson appealed to a revealed law, knowable only to the church. If natural law, however, were to be rejected because

it had not produced a universal consensus for moral judgments, it would seem that the same argument would apply to a revealed law, which similarly does not seem to have achieved a universal consensus and likely will not. Furthermore, even if one were to grant the presence of the four named institutions as divinely established, one would still need to raise the question as to what criteria were used to select those four and not others. Evil and the "survival of the fittest" may appear to be imbedded in the universe, and if so, could provide some contradictions to the embodiment of the law of love in that same universe.

It would also appear that Carlson's use of the word "structure" is unclear. He argued that particular forms of the four divinely established structures in society might vary. Historians testify that, as a matter of fact, they have changed. Yet Carlson objected rather strongly to the merging of functions of the structures, which suggests the possibility of some preferred arrangement. Perhaps Carlson is referring more to functions than to structures. Furthermore, by granting divine sanction to coercion on behalf of order and retributive justice while questioning such sanction with respect to other areas of justice, despite his use of Aulen's law of love as "genuine concern for one's neighbor," Carlson tended to limit the perspective of justice which the church might give to the state. In addition, his elevation of divine sanction for order and retributive justice tends to give greater support to the status quo than to reform. And finally, one might argue that in saying the gospel was addressed only to persons as individuals, Carlson may have drawn his case too sharply and unnecessarily eliminated the group or corporate address of the gospel.

In the effort to fashion new and more solid theological footings

for a social ethic within the Augustana Church, both Mattson and Carlson were aided by E. E. Ryden, editor of the Lutheran Companion. Ryden did not publish a volume explaining his ethical theory, but his editorials nevertheless reflected his method. That method was to select a few carefully chosen statements, generally attributed to Jesus, and usually understood to refer to war and peace. From these few statements, Ryden felt he had an adequate beachhead from which to launch a heavy assault on all efforts at armed conflict. To use the Bible to fortify one's position on a given issue was not new in American Lutheranism. What was new was the set of verses selected--many from the sermon on the mount--and the compulsion which Ryden felt to give expression to those verses in as nearly a literal way as possible. The use to which Ryden put his method has been shown in the first section and will be documented again in the chapter dealing with the post World War II era.

Despite the theological effort, however, one gets the impression that the continuation of a developing social responsibility within the Augustana Church received greater impetus from a confrontation with the social issues themselves rather than from the theological efforts, although the latter helped provide a framework within which to operate.

War As Chief Catalyst

Augustana was war conscious. This concern activated more response than any factor in the rise of a social consciousness. During the first two years of this period under study, Augustana adopted resolutions opposing universal military training and supporting a statement prepared by the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches calling on all nations to work toward a just peace and urging the victorious nations to combine justice with mercy in the exercise of what was called a new

responsibility toward God.¹

Opposition to armaments on behalf of peace necessitated both by the nature of faith and the American tradition, continued to find expression at the annual Augustana conventions. Resolutions incorporating such ideas were adopted both in 1948 and in 1951. In 1950, in reference to the cold war stalemate, the convention responded to President Bersell's message by making a strong plea to all governments, especially to the United States, to produce "a gigantic new all-out effort for peace and thus bring the present tragic deadlock to an end." At the 1952 convention, the delegates adopted a resolution of thanks to those Augustana citizens who had worked to defeat universal military training. The convention, however, did not support a resolution from the Commission on Morals and Social Problems which expressed support for American and United Nations financial and technical assistance programs in under-developed areas.²

In 1955, the Augustana Synod restated its support for the conscientious objector, "with the understanding that every conscientious objector has the duty to render equivalent service toward the well-being of the community." Also adopted was a section from the Evanston Assembly report which called upon all nations to pledge that they would refrain from the use of atomic or hydrogen weapons against any state and would confine the testing of such weapons within the territory of the nation

¹Augustana, Minutes (1945), p. 312; and (1946), pp. 297-299. See also Minutes, Commission on Morals and Social Problems, April 8, 1946, p. 1 (in Augustana archives).

²Augustana, Minutes (1948), p. 341; (1951), p. 59; (1950), p. 52; and (1952), pp. 53 and 378-379. See also Minutes, Commission on Morals and Social Problems, April 8, 1948, p. 1; and October 3, 1952, p. 1.

conducting the tests. The statement also condemned the "mass destruction of civilians in open cities by whatever means and for whatever purpose."¹

A plea for universal disarmament, including an agreement to ban the use of atomic weapons, was made at the 1956 convention. Motivation was again said to be the gospel and the law of love. The action was coupled with a request to the federal government that steps be taken to halt the peacetime draft. In addition, the convention voted to urge the United States to utilize the United Nations in resolving world tensions and "to insist that our western allies recognize the right of colonial peoples to liberty and self-government." The National Lutheran Council statement, which called attention to what African and Asian nations understood to be support of colonialism by the United States through its votes in the United Nations, was also adopted.²

In 1952, the Evangelical Lutheran Church had adopted a vague resolution which said in part that "the Christian Gospel offers the only workable, satisfactory and permanent basis for the solution of the world's ills."³ That church body, however, did not delineate the meaning of such a statement. In 1957, five years later, the Augustana Lutheran Church adopted a resolution embodying a somewhat similar notion, but Augustana reflected its difference from the ELC at this point by proceeding to explain what it meant by the phrases used. Specifically, Augustana voted to say that

it is our firm conviction as Christians that international relations must be in their essence a practical application of the Gospel of

¹Augustana, Minutes (1955), pp. 353-355.

²Ibid. (1956), pp. 387 and 441-442. See also supra, p. 222.

³See supra, p. 245.

Jesus Christ, to wit:

a. That we recognize the United Nations can be a good instrumentality for the pacific solution of the world's troubles and that it promises to be our best vehicle on the road to world friendship and peace, and

b. That we reject as totally unworthy of any nation a foreign policy whose goals are the acquisition of strategic military bases around the world, the building of powerful military alliances, and the consequent subservience of peoples out of fear of military and commercial might, and

c. That we endorse a foreign policy aimed toward building between nations bridges of trust, mutual aid, exchange of ideas and culture, as well as the free flow of commerce and communication, and

d. That we propose to further human welfare everywhere in the world by helping men in all places to achieve the ends of justice and liberty under law, an elimination of the tyranny of base and cynical despots, and likewise an elimination of the tyranny of hunger and disease in less-favored parts of the world, and

e. That for such ends of human welfare to be achieved we propose to lead all nations in mutually aiding under-developed areas by providing opportunities for economic advancement, cultural enrichment, and educational enlightenment and that we share generously of our own rich resources to that end, and

f. That we commend our leadership in foreign policy to exemplify a national respect for the dignity of men regardless of color, culture, and condition and to manifest a due regard for the rights of all groups to self-determination limited only by each nation's proper respect for the law of God and the rights of other men.

g. We urge the government of the United States to exert all possible influence among the nations of the world to bring about the cessation of the testing of nuclear weapons which might endanger the welfare of the human race.¹

For a Lutheran church to be able to make such an explicit statement about international affairs at one of its conventions certainly signals a new day. At a time when John Foster Dulles had just completed the SEATO Alliance and the Bagdad Pact and was attempting to firm up the NATO Alliance, Augustana publicly rejected those moves by terming such policies unworthy of the nation. She then endorsed foreign aid programs on behalf of under-developed countries, while flashing warning signals not to interfere with the internal integrity of another nation. Just a year after proposals to limit the testing of nuclear weapons had proven

¹Augustana, Minutes (1957), pp. 199-200. See also Minutes, Commission on Morals and Social Problems, February 14, 1957, p. 1.

rather unpopular in a presidential campaign, Augustana voted to support such a program. The old quietism of leaving all questions of state to the state had quite obviously been laid aside. While one might argue about the possibility and outcome of the "practical application" of the gospel to the international arena, one would have to concede that Augustana had moved into the center of the ring of public affairs and made a rather direct statement concerning the conduct of foreign relations. Minimally, one would have to say that a broadening sense of social responsibility was developing. Such action surely did not reflect a continuing quietism. Moreover, this statement also illustrates the greater influence of A. D. Mattson rather than Edgar Carlson on Augustana. Mattson, who was chairman of the commission which wrote the bulk of the statement, believed love and the gospel could be applied directly to the state. Carlson had rejected that idea, choosing to move instead from the doctrine of creation through law.

At the final convention of the Augustana Church during this period under study the delegates voted to request the renamed Commission on Social Action to study the question of the recognition of Red China. A resolution urging the American government to work through the United Nations toward "a controlled and adequately safeguarded mutual disarmament" and to instruct the educational and auxiliary agencies of the church to educate the membership concerning the possible dangers of continued nuclear testing and a nuclear war, was also adopted.¹

Limited action regarding international issues was also taken at conference conventions. In 1946, the Illinois Conference voted to send letters of protest against universal military training to senators from

¹Augustana, Minutes (1960), p. 567.

Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin, as well as to President Truman and the chairman of the Senate committee on military affairs. Resolutions were also presented at the 1947 convention reiterating opposition to UMT and urging government aid to enemy countries. In fact, opposition to UMT appeared in Illinois Conference minutes in four successive years beginning in 1946. In 1958, the conference voted to urge America to be patient in its efforts at negotiation and disarmament.¹

The Kansas Conference similarly voted frequently in opposition to UMT and to protest by-passing the United Nations in foreign affairs in favor of unilateral action. Minnesota adopted resolutions embodying similar ideas. The New England Conference expressed its concern about continued nuclear testing as early as 1955 and again in 1958 and 1960, while at the same time encouraging the work of the United Nations. Support for the United Nations was also expressed in the California and New York conferences, although a supporting resolution in the former conference convention was returned to committee.²

The Lutheran Companion continued to express the strong concern for peace which it had voiced before World War II. As early as 1946, the editor, E. E. Ryden, was wondering aloud whether the American policy of thwarting German redevelopment was not in fact sowing the seeds for a new war. The appointment of George S. Marshall as secretary of state was opposed because the gentleman was a general and favored universal

¹Illinois Conference, Minutes (1946), pp. 148-149; (1947), pp. 95-96; (1948), pp. 103-104; (1949), p. 102; and (1958), p. 74.

²Kansas Conference, ibid. (1946), p. 23; (1950), p. 80; (1951), p. 89; (1952), p. 94; Minnesota Conference, ibid. (1952), p. 171; (1954), p. 165; (1956), p. 166; New England Conference, ibid. (1955), p. 113; (1958), p. 121; (1960), p. 128; California Conference, ibid. (1947), p. 52; and New York Conference, ibid. (1953), p. 174.

military training. Such an appointment, Ryden remarked, could hardly allay Russian suspicions that America was embarking on world imperialism. When President Truman proposed aiding Greece and Turkey, Ryden suggested it was the first step toward World War III just as Roosevelt's Chicago address calling for the quarantine of aggressor nations was termed the first step in American involvement in World War II. Ryden stated his conviction that the common people of Russia desired peace and that therefore the church must assert its voice on behalf of peace and against hate, suspicion, revenge, and war. When a United States naval court sentenced a Japanese admiral and ten of his officers to be hung for killing ninety-six civilian employees of Pan-American Airlines, Ryden asked why such an act was a crime while the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was considered legitimate.¹

When President Truman began to respond with firmness to Russia's actions on the international scene, Ryden offered him no plaudits. The editor argued that American policy seemed aimed at building an iron ring around Russia and asked whether the Russians could be blamed for resenting this encirclement. Such action by America hardly improved the international scene, the Companion observed tartly, and suggested that the tough stance was being taken by Washington in order to sell the country on what was said to be the government's militaristic attitude. When conversations with Russia broke up without results, Ryden expressed disappointment that Washington refused to begin new talks.²

¹"Was Their Blood Spilled in Vain?", Lutheran Companion, May 8, 1946, pp. 3-4; "More Military Men at Federal Helm," ibid., February 5, 1947, p. 3; "Is America Preparing for World War III," ibid., March 26, 1947, p. 3; and "What Constitutes a War Crime?", ibid., February 6, 1946, pp. 3-4.

²"Where Will America's Foreign Policy Lead?", ibid., January 21,

Ryden protested the formation of the NATO alliance, arguing that it would intensify the armaments race and spell doom for the United Nations by creating regional pacts. He similarly protested Truman's decision to build the hydrogen bomb, saying the threat of coercion had always led to war. On the sixth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, Ryden wrote that there had been no justification for Truman's decision to release the bomb. He expressed continued dismay that Secretary Marshall and defense department officials were pressing for universal military training. In the midst of the Korean crisis, Ryden attacked the proposed \$51,000,000,000 defense budget. On the other hand he hailed the announcement that the dismantling of German industry would be halted and expressed particular joy over the prospect of a demilitarized Germany. He endorsed Truman's support of the United Nations and the President's statements that America sought no territorial acquisitions in the Far East.¹

When Eisenhower was elected president, Ryden took a cautious position. He did not attack the President for having been a military man as he had attacked Marshall when the latter was named secretary of

1948, p. 3; "Is President Leading America into War?", Lutheran Companion, March 31, 1948, pp. 3-4; and "Do We Really Want Peace with Russia?", ibid., May 26, 1948, pp. 3-4.

¹"Will Military Alliance Lead to War or Peace?", ibid., April 20, 1949, p. 3; "Are We Heading Down Fatal Road to War?", Augustana Lutheran, March 1, 1950, pp. 9 and 16; "Sixth Anniversary of the Bombing of Hiroshima," ibid., August 15, 1951, p. 7; "Is America Being Led into Military State?", ibid., January 31, 1951, p. 7; "Mad Armament Race and Record Budget," Lutheran Companion, February 6, 1952, p. 7; "Dismantling of German Industries To Cease," ibid., December 7, 1949, p. 3; and "Truman's Message Reassures Nation," Augustana Lutheran, September 20, 1950, pp. 7 and 22. It should be noted that during 1950 and 1951, the name Lutheran Companion was changed to Augustana Lutheran. In 1952, the name Lutheran Companion was resumed on the masthead.

state. "Hitherto a man of war," Ryden wrote referring to Eisenhower, "may God make of him an ambassador and apostle of peace." The editor later described as a paradox the American action of electing a general to be President while striving for peace.¹

After Stalin's death, Ryden viewed Malenkov's initial pronouncements as being very hopeful for world peace. At a time when Senator McCarthy was making the idea of peaceful coexistence somewhat unpopular, Ryden wrote that there were no differences between Russia and the United States which could not be negotiated peacefully. When trouble developed in the Formosa straits, Ryden observed that American intervention could lead to war and would cause suspicion in the minds of Asiatics. War should not be risked, Ryden asserted, merely to assist Chiang Kai-shek's ambition to rule China again. According to Ryden it was Chiang's fault that China had been lost, through his failure to institute social reforms and clean up his regime.²

John Foster Dulles received some of the most scathing criticism from Ryden. Perhaps this fact helped prepare in part the way for the statement adopted by Augustana in 1957 which repudiated much of what Dulles sought to accomplish. Ryden confessed to keen disappointment in Dulles and criticized the secretary for making belligerent remarks after President Eisenhower had spoken in conciliatory tones. In 1957, Ryden wrote that had Dulles purposely chosen to wreck the London disarmament talks, he could not have done so more successfully than he did by stating

¹"Eisenhower Becomes Nations 34th Head," Lutheran Companion, November 19, 1952, p. 7; and "New Chief Executive Takes Oath of Office," ibid., January 21, 1953, p. 7.

²"Will Russia's New Rulers Seek Peace?", ibid., April 8, 1953, p. 7; "War Over Formosa," ibid., February 2, 1955, p. 7; and "Why Defend Quemoy?", ibid., September 24, 1958, p. 5.

that the United States was considering the possibility of stock piling nuclear weapons for its military allies in Europe. When Eisenhower ordered the marines into Lebanon, Ryden leveled his attack at Dulles, saying that the secretary seemed

to be more concerned about supporting kings, princes and political chiefs who are willing to grant commercial concessions to the United States than he is to give his sympathy and support to the aspirations of the common people of the world who are seeking social, economic and political freedom.¹

After the Fifth World Order Study Conference held in Cleveland in 1958, Ryden jubilantly wrote that the conference "may be said to mark the end of Secretary of State Dulles' domination over the thinking of American Protestantism in the realm of foreign relations." Ryden pointed out that in 1953, a majority of delegates at the Fourth Conference had approved the formation of regional pacts such as NATO in order to protect the security of America and the free world. A minority had protested this stand. Ryden considered the Fifth Conference to have retreated from its 1953 position and to have acknowledged the correctness of the minority position of five years earlier. Ryden therefore hailed the Fifth Conference as historic. He wrote:

For two decades the Churches have accepted, more or less reluctantly, the political philosophy of John Foster Dulles in international affairs. That philosophy was built largely on America's superior armed force. They are now discovering, rather belatedly, that there is no power in the world that is greater or stronger than the power of Christian love.²

Despite an expressed concern for people seeking social, economic, and political freedom, however, Ryden did not urge American support of

¹"For Peace or War?", Lutheran Companion, February 1, 1956, p. 7; "Dims Disarmament Hopes," ibid., August 14, 1957, p. 5; and "Another War Crisis," ibid., August 20, 1958, p. 5.

²"Demand a Peace Policy," ibid., December 24, 1958, pp. 7-8.

the Hungarian revolt in 1956. He quite consistently favored the United States decision not to intervene in the Suez crisis of that same year. Ryden joined the chorus of those calling attention to the danger of atomic fallout and continued to the end of this period to oppose the peace-time draft.¹

Other persons joined Ryden in the crusade for peace. In 1958, President Benson spoke despairingly about the manner in which America ignored the increasing volume of protests against nuclear testing and dismissed the proposals of other nations as propaganda. Such a viewpoint had cost America the moral leadership of the world, he said.² Mr. John F. Palm, a layman and public school superintendent frequently wrote on behalf of demobilization and for building peace around the United Nations. Pleas to work for peace, to share material wealth with all nations, to recognize the equality of all races, and to develop an international organization which could represent all nations and enforce decisions made their way into print in the Companion. World federal government was advocated. The idea of a preventive war was attacked. The incompatibility of the Christian ethic with modern warfare was asserted. The distinction between a just and an unjust war was rejected. Mr. Ryden perhaps exercised his editorial prerogative in choosing articles carefully. In any event, the theme relating to war was overwhelmingly on the side of its rejection and on behalf of a summons to peace.³

¹"Under Heel of Oppressor," Lutheran Companion, November 21, 1956, p. 7; "No War over Suez," ibid., October 3, 1956, p. 7; "An Ominous Warning," ibid., June 19, 1957, p. 5; and "Opposed to Draft Law," ibid., February 25, 1959, p. 5.

²Augustana, Minutes (1958), p. 99.

³Palm, "Let Us Demobilize," Lutheran Companion, August 7, 1946, pp. 6-7; "Any Good in Conscription?," ibid., February 18, 1948, pp. 9-10; and "The Christian Conscience," Augustana Lutheran, March 14, 1951, p. 9;

Church, State, Civil Liberties, and Labor

In 1951, the Augustana Church elected a new president, Oscar A. Benson. He had earned his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in the field of sociology and he reflected sociological interests in most of his statements to the church. In his first report to an Augustana convention, Dr. Benson said:

Too often, the presentation of a moral approach to political issues has been left to men and women outside the Church. Too often, churchmen manifest a disturbing lack of courage in this respect as compared to champions of social righteousness among the unchurched. Let us not forget that much political legislation involves moral questions, and to that extent Christians, not only as citizens, but as followers of Christ, are obliged to make their voice heard. It is gratifying to observe that our Lutheran Church too is rapidly becoming aware of this obligation, as evidenced with regard to such proposed political action as Universal Military Training.¹

Benson went on to propose to the convention that a committee, such as the Commission on Morals and Social Problems, be authorized to speak on behalf of Augustana whenever vital issues arose. "If the Living Word is humanity's hope, that Word must be brought to bear concretely in the solution of current social problems as well as in the redemption of individuals," Benson observed. The synod did not establish such a committee nor grant authority to the Commission on Morals and Social Problems to speak on behalf of the church. Instead, the delegates voted to urge that commission "to keep the constituency of the Church informed on

Emory Lindquist, "What Basis for World Order?", Lutheran Companion, February 18, 1948, p. 8; Bruce D. Compton, "The Christian and World Peace," ibid., July 14, 1948, pp. 13-14; Walter Norlin, "Why Not World Government?", Augustana Lutheran, May 30, 1951, p. 11; George E. Hulstrand, "The Paradox of Peace," ibid., May 2, 1951, pp. 8-9; Martin E. Carlson, "What Can Lutheran Preaching Contribute to Permanent World Peace?", Augustana Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1947), pp. 36-50; and Dr. Otto W. Heick, "Luther on War," ibid., XXVII (October, 1948), pp. 323-335.

¹Augustana, Minutes (1952), p. 43.

pending issues involving moral considerations."¹

Dr. Benson continued to advocate these views so long as he was president. In 1958 he expressed unhappiness that many non-Christians or indifferent church members showed a greater moral sensitivity than many formally committed Christians. Such ought not be the case, he said, because the proclamation of moral principles was primarily the Christian's business.²

Conferences reflected what Benson had called the rapidly developing sense of social obligation. In 1951, for example, the Kansas Conference adopted resolutions which endorsed American shipment of grain to India, commended the Kefauver investigating committee, urged continued education concerning the effects of alcohol, deplored the increase in gambling, reiterated the belief that the United Nations ought not be bypassed in international affairs, and urged Congress to pass the FEPC bill to prevent discrimination because of race, color, or place of origin.³ The California Conference in 1950 received a report from its Commission on Social Action which said that the church ought to assist in the solution of problems in the fields of economics, human and civil rights, race relations, labor-management relations, liberty, and war. The commission reported about a survey of thirty-six clergymen. Eleven had reported being criticized by congregation or community for discussing such items as FEPC, liquor control, old age pensions, gambling, conscientious objectors, peace, civil rights, race, and the admitting of displaced persons into the United States. Fourteen had said their pulpits were open to a

¹Augustana, Minutes (1952), pp. 43 and 53.

²Ibid. (1958), p. 99.

³Kansas Conference, ibid. (1951), p. 89.

discussion of social issues. Twenty-one used their study classes for such purposes and seven chose to work through church organizations. Fifteen pastors reported having distributed pamphlets on social issues, seven had written legislators on civic issues, and five had written local newspapers.¹

In other conference action, Illinois voted in 1951 to say that both clergy and laymen were responsible for the establishment of good government and the improvement of social conditions "in accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ." In 1950, the New England Conference organized a Commission on Morals and Social Action, with Dr. Oscar A. Benson as the first chairman. The convention adopted a resolution saying the church was "the conscience of the state and has not only the right but also the duty to speak out clearly on public questions whenever a moral issue is involved." In 1954, that same conference instructed its Commission on Morals and Social Action to do research and provide literature toward the goal of educating the church concerning public issues. The commission was charged with the responsibility of representing the church publicly on behalf of what was termed constructive social action, and was instructed to "cultivate within the districts and congregations a public opinion, enlightened by moral standards, which shall be favorable to Christian action."²

The New York Conference had given similar instructions to its morals and social action group in 1953 and four years later, that conference voted to petition the national convention to endorse the responsi-

¹California Conference, Minutes (1950), pp. 50-52.

²Illinois Conference, ibid. (1951), p. 106; and New England Conference, ibid. (1950), p. 119; and (1954), pp. 111-113.

bility of the clergy to study political problems, such as war, labor-management, race, and refugees, and to instruct the parishioners according to the implications of the gospel. In 1958, delegates to the national convention responded affirmatively to the New York proposal by voting to say that "it is the responsibility of the pastor to assess political and social trends in the light of the Word of God and share his insights in his preaching and teaching with the people of his congregation." Even the Superior Conference, which was one of the most inactive of the Augustana conferences regarding social issues, voted in 1957 to establish a commission which the following year was named the Commission on Social Action. In 1958, Superior delegates instructed the commission to create an awareness among the clergy and laity of the conference concerning moral and social problems, to inform the pastors regarding legislation at the national and state levels, to lead the pastors and congregations in united social action when necessary, and to assist the conference in making statements on social issues. In addition, the commission was asked to provide the pastors and congregations with the names and addresses of the legislators.¹

Such formal action suggests the day of quietism had passed. Christian social action was to be the order of the day. Recognition of this fact was made further obvious in 1957 when the national convention changed the name of its Commission on Morals and Social Problems to Commission on Social Action.² Contact between church and state was to grow. Writing in the Augustana Quarterly, Dr. Conrad Bergendoff argued

¹New York Conference, Minutes (1953), p. 173; and (1957), p. 43; Augustana, ibid. (1958), p. 215; and Superior Conference, ibid. (1957), p. 109; and (1958), pp. 90-91.

²Augustana, ibid. (1957), p. 200.

that Lutherans were "unrealistic" in contending for a complete separation of church and state. He maintained that inasmuch as a democracy derived its power from the people, all citizens, including Christians, had a responsibility toward the state. Bergendoff argued that "while we may distinguish between State and Church, we can not restrict our message to the Church, leaving the State for whoever will claim it."¹

Augustana seemed convinced she could not leave the state to whoever would claim it. Instead, she felt her responsibility to activate the public conscience. In addressing the state concretely on given issues as well as speaking to her membership, Augustana differed from the ALC which formally addressed her remarks only to the church and its members.

New social concern in Augustana focused during this era on civil liberties. In response to an address by President Benson, the 1953 Augustana convention called upon its members "to resist the inquisition of self-appointed monitors of our consciences and assert their freedom as American citizens." Early in 1954, the Commission on Morals and Social Problems adopted a statement prepared by Benson on the rights of a free conscience. This statement was presented to the summer convention of the Augustana Church and adopted. At the height of the tensions resulting from the investigations by Senator Joseph McCarthy, especially those relating to the Army-McCarthy hearings, the Augustana Church voted a strong censure of such proceedings. The resolution recognized the need of the state to protect the security of the nation and even stated approval of "appropriate governmental action" in connection with subversion

¹"A Free Church in a Free Nation," Augustana Quarterly, XXV (January, 1946), pp. 70-71; and "Preaching and Human Life," ibid., XXVI (January, 1947), p. 71.

in government and other American institutions. However, such action was approved "just so long as the rights of free conscience and free expression and other traditional liberties remain untrammelled." The statement then proceeded to condemn "movements and activities which, ostensibly to achieve the good purpose of insuring national security, actually have endangered our society by sowing seeds of suspicion among us." Such groups, the statement continued, had "irresponsibly and needlessly" cast a cloud of suspicion on some loyal churchmen who had merely expressed and associated themselves freely. The convention delegates said they were "alarmed" at

the abandonment of the accepted orderly method of investigation and prosecution of wrong-doing, the misdirection of legislative inquiry to propaganda ends, the usurpation of indictment functions by unqualified and unauthorized agencies, and the rendering of verdicts without traditional trial procedures that protect the rights of the accused.

Hence the delegates concluded that if such practices were allowed to go unchecked, tyranny not only threatened American liberties but might also prevent the full and free proclamation of the gospel.¹

The Lutheran Companion joined the fray. In 1953, Ryden printed Eisenhower's reply to the charge by J. B. Matthews that "the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen." The reply was included in an editorial entitled, "Witch-Hunting Given Rebuke by President." Ryden also called attention to protests from church groups and said that the church would not be intimidated by such attacks.²

¹Augustana, Minutes (1953), p. 54; and (1954), pp. 228-229. See also Minutes, Commission on Morals and Social Problems, January 15, 1954, p. 2.

²"Witch-Hunting Given Rebuke by President," Lutheran Companion, July 29, 1953, pp. 7 and 18; and "Demands Free Speech for Church Pulpit," ibid., September 16, 1953, p. 7.

Some of the conferences also defended civil liberties. In four succeeding conventions beginning in 1953, the Kansas Conference protested the use of totalitarian means to protect democracy. While rejecting communism, the resolutions called for reasonable attitudes, urged support of "all civil liberties," and called on Congress to enlarge and strengthen the civil liberties section of the justice department.¹

Illinois voted in 1954 "to protest vigorously" against any restriction on freedom of thought and expression, saying they were particularly aroused when the clergy were censured for exercising their rights in the pulpits and classrooms. Moreover, the resolution also protested the practice of considering persons guilty until they had been proven innocent. That same year, California discussed the filing of loyalty oaths in that state and in Arizona. The convention adopted a resolution urging the congregations to comply with the law but to file a protest. New England voted to call the attention of their congregations to a statement from the National Council of Churches calling for fair treatment of witnesses at congressional hearings. And at a time when the Hutterites in South Dakota found their religious liberty in jeopardy, the New York Conference voted to ask the national social action commission to investigate the matter.²

In 1960, during the presidential primary and election campaigns, Augustana's concern for civil liberties encountered some difficulty. The problem centered around the question whether an Augustana Lutheran could

¹Kansas Conference, Minutes (1953), pp. 98 and 100; (1954), pp. 96-97; (1955), p. 102; and (1956), p. 113.

²Illinois Conference, ibid. (1954), p. 130; California Conference, ibid. (1954), p. 77; New England Conference, ibid. (1954), pp. 113-114; and New York Conference, ibid. (1959), p. 169.

in good conscience vote for a Roman Catholic for president. At the national convention that year, the Augustana delegates received a lengthy report from the Commission on Social Action. The statement acknowledged that voters ought to consider a variety of factors before deciding how to vote. Such factors included the position of candidates toward concrete issues, the ideology of the candidate (which was understood to mean chiefly a religious ideology), the relation of such an ideology to political issues, the possible "institutional pressures for conformity," and the response of the candidate to such pressures.¹

The report also acknowledged that democracy ought to permit the widest possible range of belief and practice, but it said, "there is no obligation on the part of the voter to sanction them." Tolerance, it was said, was not "a principle that necessarily applies to all areas of experience," and consequently was not applicable to ignorance, injustice, and error. The statement further affirmed that "a Roman Catholic should not as such be legally barred from the presidency," yet it also asserted that it was "equally obvious" that a candidate's religious affiliation should be considered, together with an estimate of the pressures of such a religious affiliation upon the candidate and his likely response to it.²

The statement referred to institutional control which the Roman Catholic Church was said to exert over its membership, and pointed out that such control could be exercised in extreme cases by the rite of excommunication. Protestants, the statement said, were free to appropriate the pronouncements of their churches in the light of the individual's conscience, whereas "the Roman Catholic can assert no broad right of

¹Augustana, Minutes (1960), p. 257.

²Ibid.

conscientious testing except under threat of very grave sin in the eyes of his church." The statement further referred to moments of Roman Catholic influence in South America, Spain, and even in North America, with respect to the retention of birth control laws in New England. Hence the writers asserted that while "nothing is predictable with certainty," nevertheless "the fact remains that the Roman Church makes a claim to exercise authority over its members, even in the political sphere, and that it may choose to exercise that claim over a Roman Catholic president in the promotion of its ends."¹

While stating that no dangers could occur immediately in the area of concrete political issues, the commission report nevertheless concluded that there were "grounds for reasonable doubt that a Roman Catholic president would be free of institutional control and from desires to promote in special ways the ends of the Roman Church." Such a situation in turn raised "the question of a potential threat to the work of the Church, the conscience of its members, and the traditional ideals and sense of justice of American society," it was said. Hence Augustana members were cautioned to give special consideration to the problems mentioned and to use their privilege of voting should a Roman Catholic be nominated.²

The statement from the Commission on Social Action, of which A. D. Mattson continued to be chairman, was not formally adopted by the convention. The delegates did, however, adopt a resolution which said in full:

¹Augustana, Minutes (1960), pp. 256-258.

²Ibid., pp. 258-261.

WHEREAS

The ideological beliefs and affiliations or the lack of them are, among other criteria, valid grounds for judging the fitness of candidates for public office;

AND WHEREAS

It is a misuse of the concept of tolerance to exclude such criteria from consideration;

The Church remind its members of their individual responsibilities as voting citizens and urge a conscientious and prayerful study of these factors before voting for any candidate for public office.¹

No reader of the report could mistake the statement's intent.

Thus it was perhaps not surprising that at the end of the campaign when some Lutheran theological professors endorsed Senator Kennedy, Augustana's new president Malvin Lundeen joined with F. A. Schiotz, president of the ELC, in a public rebuke of the men for identifying themselves as Lutheran churchmen in making their endorsement. Lundeen and Schiotz maintained that neither the Augustana Church nor any of its institutions endorsed political candidates, and that for pastors, theological professors, or church executives to do so was to perform a disservice to the church. Such action tended to identify the church with one party, they said, and to be a divisive element in the congregations.²

As the Augustana Church moved through the 50's, resolutions touching on numerous other items appeared in conference and synod halls. In 1957, the national convention voted to oppose capital punishment on grounds that the state can protect society without resorting to punishment by death, that execution terminated any possibility of a redemptive approach to the offender, that execution cancelled any possibility for correcting a possible miscarriage of justice, and that there was no

¹Augustana, Minutes (1960), p. 261. For a more open view concerning this same issue, note the ALC position as discussed in supra, pp. 264ff.

²Lundeen, "The Church and Political Endorsements," Lutheran Companion, December 14, 1960, p. 3. For further discussion see supra, p. 220.

conclusive evidence capital punishment deterred the commitment of any crimes. In a similar frame of mind, the California Conference petitioned their state legislators to abolish the practice.¹

In the Commission on Morals and Social Problems, A. D. Mattson pushed his concern for the laboring man. The group affirmed the latter's right to bargain collectively, and in 1954 the national convention concurred. Mattson, however, returned the following year urging the commission to protest to Augustana's own publishing house that the latter was not only ignoring the right of laborers to bargain collectively, but was also ignoring an expressed policy of the church. When corruption broke out in the labor unions, Augustana adopted a statement prepared by the National Council of Churches urging corrective legislation and saying that management and the church were responsible for the tragedies as well as the unions themselves. Conferences called for the church to work for improvement of labor-management relations, for the settlement of disputes by peaceful arbitration and for a fair distribution of income between the two groups.²

Affairs of church and state continued to get a hearing not only nationally but at the conference level. The Kinsey reports were labeled both "unscientific" and "unchristian." The church was warned not to enter into an "unholy alliance" with capitalism. Concern was expressed in a positive way for the improvement of standards for farm-worker camps.

¹Augustana, Minutes (1957), p. 201; and California Conference, ibid. (1956), p. 95.

²Minutes, Commission on Morals and Social Problems, January 15, 1954, p. 3; and January 26, 1955, p. 1; Augustana, Minutes (1954), pp. 228-229; and (1958), pp. 214-215; Illinois Conference, ibid. (1947), p. 96; (1948), pp. 102-103; and (1957), p. 138; and New England Conference, ibid. (1951), pp. 111-112.

Concern was expressed in a negative way about the prospect of a United States ambassador to the Vatican. Reflecting more articulated concern about liquor and gambling than any of the other bodies under study, Augustana condemned such practices and called for better law enforcement in these areas. Concern for the improvement of television programs crept into conference conventions. Resolutions were adopted calling for the closing of all non-essential business on Sunday, although New York qualified this by saying that respect for other faiths prohibited banning all Sunday business. Study was urged of mental health problems, water control, and soil conservation. Concern was expressed for state and national aid to elderly citizens to cover medical and nursing care. The Iowa Conference even found itself disposed to protest the scheduling of basketball games on Ash Wednesday.¹

A Change in Race Relations

Like other churches, Augustana was moved by the revolution in race relations. She fought on both sides of the fight.

¹Augustana, Minutes (1954), p. 228; California Conference, ibid. (1949), p. 30; (1957), p. 107; (1952), p. 95; New York Conference, ibid. (1946), p. 90; Illinois Conference, ibid. (1947), p. 95; (1949), p. 102; (1950), p. 114; (1951), pp. 106-107; Iowa Conference, ibid. (1950), p. 93; (1951), p. 110; (1954), pp. 105-108; (1955), pp. 102-105; (1960), p. 98; Kansas Conference, ibid. (1951), p. 89; (1952), p. 94; (1953), pp. 100-101; (1955), pp. 102-103; (1956), pp. 113-116; Minnesota Conference, ibid. (1945), p. 158; (1949), p. 133; (1950), p. 86; (1951), p. 148; (1952), p. 137; (1953), p. 163; (1956), p. 167; (1957), p. 178; (1960), p. 183; Nebraska Conference, ibid. (1948), p. 87; (1957), p. 92; (1959), p. 84; New England Conference, ibid. (1951), p. 112; New York Conference, ibid. (1946), p. 90; (1948), p. 96; (1952), p. 39; (1953), p. 172; Illinois Conference, ibid. (1950), p. 115; (1951), pp. 106-107; (1957), p. 138; Kansas Conference, ibid. (1956), pp. 113-116; New York Conference, ibid. (1958), pp. 45 and 177; Central Conference, ibid. (1959), pp. 94-96; Minnesota Conference, ibid. (1952), p. 171; Kansas Conference, ibid. (1954), pp. 96-97; (1957), pp. 111-113; New England Conference, ibid. (1960), p. 128; and Iowa Conference, ibid. (1960), pp. 98-99.

Early in 1946, the Commission on Morals and Social Problems, borrowing from the American Lutheran Conference, voted to adopt a statement on Negro-white relations and to submit it to the national convention that year.¹

When the resolution reached the convention floor, the report was sent back to the commission for further study.² Two years later, the commission brought back a brief report to the convention which said in its entirety:

Whereas, God is the Creator and Father of all races, and all races have a common origin and hence common human qualities, and
Whereas, Christ died for all men, and
Whereas, the Christian ethic demands mutual good will, justice, and co-operation among all racial groups and appreciation and respect for human personality in every racial group,

Be it resolved:

1. That the Augustana Synod condemn all forms of racial prejudice and discrimination and urge the promotion of equal rights and opportunities in reference to cultural, social, economic, civic, and religious matters.³

The adoption of such a statement prior to the Supreme Court school decision marked a noteworthy moment. In view of the fact, however, that segregation with its "separate but equal" understanding was not viewed by all persons as discriminatory, one would have to say that both the adopted statement and the one proposed two years earlier did not go as far concerning race relations as the court was to proceed in only six years.

In 1947, the Rev. Martin E. Carlson had written that the church was one of the last organized groups in society to attack the race

¹Augustana, Minutes (1946), pp. 299-300. See also Minutes, Commission on Morals and Social Problems, April 8, 1946, pp. 2-4; and supra, p. 210.

²Augustana, Minutes (1946), p. 301.

³Ibid. (1948), p. 341.

problem and had warned that the world would be watching to see if the church would do more than talk about the situation.¹ In 1951, the Board of American Missions reported establishing the first Negro congregation in the history of the Augustana Church. The congregation was located in Oakland, California. Simultaneously, the board also announced the beginning of cooperative work with a congregation in Brooklyn which was planning an inter-racial ministry.² The Lutheran Companion reported editorially that announcement of the inter-racial experiment was "one of the surprises" of the convention and that it would be watched with interest.³ No endorsement of the project was made. President Benson seemed more interested in the subject than the Companion, however, when, in giving his first address as president to the Augustana Church, he denounced racial prejudice. The delegates adopted a resolution commending the congregations which admitted all persons regardless of race.⁴

Penetration of the racial barrier was now being recorded in other communities. In Chicago, the Rev. Philip Johnson, pastor of Salem Lutheran Church, baptized the first Negro child into his congregation in 1951 and received the first Negro communicants in 1952. By 1958, the congregation numbered 300 Negroes in its membership of 700. Pastor

¹Carlson, "What Can Lutheran Preaching Contribute to Permanent World Peace?", Augustana Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1947), pp. 36-50.

²Augustana, Minutes (1951), pp. 212-213.

³[E. E. Ryden], "First Efforts To Form Inter-Racial Church," Augustana Lutheran, August 8, 1951, p. 7. For a sampling of other articles on race written prior to 1954, see Beata Mueller, "Study Plight of the Negro," ibid., April 26, 1950, pp. 2-3; Lloyd L. Burke, "Establishing a Beachhead," ibid., February 28, 1951, pp. 8-10; Lehman Wendell, "Virus of Race Prejudice," Lutheran Companion, August 19, 1953, pp. 15 and 22; and E. E. Krebs, "Neither Race Nor Clan," ibid., September 30, 1953, pp. 12-13.

⁴Augustana, Minutes (1952), pp. 44 and 379.

Johnson also came to serve as chairman of the Human Relations Committee of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago, chairman of the Community Organization Committee of the Commission on Human Relations of the City of Chicago, as well as a member of the Advisory Committee of Clergy of the Anti-Defamation League. For his work, Johnson was awarded the Human Relations Award by the city of Chicago in 1956 as well as the Brotherhood Award of both the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Chicago Urban League.¹

Four Augustana conferences acted to improve race relations prior to the Supreme Court decision to desegregate the public schools. As usual, the conferences included California, Illinois, Kansas, and New York. In 1946, the California Conference received a report from its social action committee which called for the passage of an FEPC bill both in California and the nation, condemned all expressions of racism, especially toward the Negro and the Japanese-American, and encouraged hospitals to admit patients, doctors, and nurses without respect to race or color. The item was placed on the agenda of the next pastoral conferences. The following year, the social action committee proposed renouncing a statement by the American Lutheran Conference which permitted segregation in congregational life. The proposal was adopted after the words "protest against" were substituted for the word "renounce." A resolution attacking segregation and discrimination in hospitals was sent back to committee. In 1948, the social action committee returned with some strong words. The group reminded the conference that problems which might be tabled by church conventions "refuse to be tabled by

¹Erik Modean, "Choose Augustana Pastor," Lutheran Companion, February 26, 1958, p. 11.

life." The conference responded by asking the congregations to establish institutes to foster what was termed a Christian approach to the race question. In 1950, the conference voted to commend all congregations with integrated Sunday Schools and called attention to the Supreme Court Decision outlawing restrictive covenants. They also voted to protest to the city of Bakersfield, which was host to the convention, because a Negro representative had not been given hospitality in local hotels and motels. Clergymen were urged to take the initiative in discussing social issues with laymen and encouragement was given to the social action committee for its work. In 1954, however, when the social action committee asked the conference to help desegregate two churches by sending each congregation members for transfer, the delegates failed to take affirmative action.¹

In 1950, the Illinois Conference voted to denounce anti-semitism and to accept persons as persons. Two years later a resolution from a southern Chicago district was adopted which urged congregations not to relocate from changing neighborhoods and encouraged home mission boards to help such congregations readjust to local community service. In 1953, a resolution was adopted saying discrimination existed in the churches and calling on all congregations to serve all people in a community.²

While the expressed interest in Illinois was limited to ecclesiastical concerns relative to discrimination, that expressed in Kansas was not. That conference adopted a resolution in 1952 saying that "since

¹California Conference, Minutes (1946), pp. 45-46; (1947), p. 52; (1948), pp. 53 and 67; (1950), pp. 67-68; (1952), p. 95; and (1954), pp. 76-77.

²Illinois Conference, ibid. (1950), pp. 114-115; (1952), p. 150; and (1953), p. 33.

recognition of the equality of races and peoples is both reasonable and in accord with the teachings of Jesus Christ, we therefore, urge the Federal and State governments to enact legislation and pursue policies in keeping with that fact." People were also urged as individuals or groups to promote equality. Two years later the delegates voted to commend congregations preaching the gospel to non-whites as well as whites. Endorsement of such a congregational policy was also given by the New York Conference in 1953.¹

When the Supreme Court announced its historic decision regarding school desegregation in 1954, the Lutheran Companion seems to have had a change of heart. The editor, E. E. Ryden, now wrote:

It is hardly conceivable that the Church can afford to lag behind the State in according the Negro the justice and equality due him. For the Church to deny him any right or privilege to which the State declares he is entitled by law is to admit that the Church's standards of justice, charity and good will are lower than those of the State.

In the eyes of God, Ryden now wrote, "there is no distinction because of race or color or language or social position . . ."²

In reporting on the work of the Evanston Assembly, Ryden likened its statement on war and segregation to the speech of the Old Testament prophets. Segregation and discrimination, he warned, were "an utterable offense against God, to be endured no longer." When Miss Autherine Lucy was denied admission to the University of Alabama, Ryden called the action "disgraceful." The 1957 eruption in Little Rock was discussed in an editorial entitled, "A Disgrace to Nation." Ryden said he found the picture of soldiers escorting Negro children into the school to be

¹Kansas Conference, Minutes (1952), p. 94; and (1954), p. 96; and New York Conference, ibid. (1953), p. 174.

²"End School Desegregation," Lutheran Companion, June 2, 1954, p. 9.

"thrilling" in that it demonstrated the government would not support an apartheid position in America. When swastikas were painted on Jewish synagogues, Ryden denounced the action. Apparently the conscience of a Ryden, so sensitive in many social areas, could also be further touched and the sensitivity deepened and broadened as he reflected on the social and political events of his day.¹

People with names as well known as Dr. Martin Luther King and as little known as Anna Larson now wrote words about race, prejudice, segregation, desegregation, suffering, inhumanity, and love. Some of the words found their way into print and helped kindle further a developing social responsibility among Lutherans.²

At the 1956 national convention, Augustana delegates voted to say:

While we recognize with great joy the progress of our Lutheran Church in this land and elsewhere in the world toward the eradication in the hearts and minds of our Lutheran constituency of the sin of racial discrimination, we also confess with deep sorrow the continuing presence of such discrimination and we would call upon all Lutheran Churches in this land and elsewhere in the

¹See for example the following editorials and articles by Ryden in the Lutheran Companion: "Evanston Looks at a Troubled World," September 15, 1954, p. 3; "What the World Council Did at Evanston," September 22, 1954, pp. 12-14; "Segregation on Way Out," December 7, 1955, p. 7; "Is This Civilization?", February 22, 1956, p. 7; "A Disgrace to Nation," October 9, 1957, p. 7; and "Deplore Anti-Semitism," January 27, 1960, p. 5. For earlier views of Ryden on this topic, see supra, pp. 142ff.

²See such articles in the Lutheran Companion as M. L. King, "Out of the Long Night of Segregation," February 5, 1958, pp. 5-7; Anna Larson, "Do We Really Care?", September 17, 1958, p. 11; [E. E. Ryden], "Pastor's Home Bombed," February 6, 1957, p. 5; Robert Graetz, "Into the Lion's Mouth," April 18, 1956, pp. 8-9; C. J. Curtis, "Problem or Opportunity," August 21, 1957, pp. 7-8. See also Philip A. Johnson, "Three Questions on Church and Race," Augustana Seminary Review, II (Third Quarter, 1959), pp. 4-21; and "Serving the Community in Our Day," ibid., V (Second Quarter, 1953), pp. 9-17; and Harold Floreen, "The Lutheran Approach to Minority Groups," ibid., V (Third Quarter, 1953), p. 14.

world . . . to make an immediate, concerted effort . . . to bring about as quickly as possible the eradication of this un-Christian attitude wherever it continues to exist, . . .¹

In 1958, Augustana endorsed the National Lutheran Council statement entitled, "A Christian Affirmation on Human Relations."²

Additional action was also taken at the conference level. A California social action commission report recommending endorsement of the Supreme Court decision did not come to a vote in 1955, but in 1956 it was adopted. The Illinois Conference in 1958 extended its concern beyond evangelism. The delegates voted to say that inasmuch as

integration is one of the crucial issues facing our nation, be it resolved that our congregations be urged to foster the Christian approach to equal opportunities for people of every race and religion in employment, housing, social and cultural activities, worship of God, voting, and the exercise of all other democratic rights and responsibilities, guaranteed in the constitution of our land and embodied in Christian ethics.

In 1960, that same conference, now renamed the Central Conference, voted to reaffirm the NLC declaration, "A Christian Affirmation on Human Relations."³

Kansas and the two northeastern conferences continued to give expression to their attitudes. Kansas endorsed the Supreme Court ruling in 1955 and 1956, and in 1958 reaffirmed the NLC statement on human relations. In 1960, the New England Conference voted to ask all Augustana members who rented or sold property to do so regardless of race, color, creed, or nationality. Three years earlier the conference had heard a report concerning a questionnaire to which 60 per cent of the congregations

¹Augustana, Minutes (1956), p. 442.

²Ibid. (1958), pp. 212-217. See supra, pp. 222ff.

³California Conference, ibid. (1955), p. 83; (1956), p. 94; Illinois Conference, ibid. (1958), p. 74; and Central Conference, ibid. (1960), pp. 129-130.

had replied. All but one of them reported ministries to all people. The New York and Red River Valley conferences expressed an interest in the Indians.¹

From the south, some weak stirrings concerning the race question came from the lone star state. M. L. Lundquist, president of the Texas Conference, noted in 1956 that the Texas Council of Christian Churches had compiled official statements of the various denominations concerning the race issue. Texas Lutherans had none. Lundquist therefore quoted from a 1952 NLC home mission conference report which said in part that "inclusiveness is the very nature of the Church. No local church has any more right to decide to be racially or culturally exclusive than it has to modify or abandon any article of faith." The conference president then called for "honest, patient, and inclusive outreach to people of all segments of society living in the neighborhoods of our churches." One Augustana Lutheran congregation in Texas had decided to do this, Lundquist reported.²

The Augustana delegates did not respond in such forthright language as the ALC Texas delegates did that same year.³ The former said they were "mindful" of their "mission to all people, regardless of race or nationality or social status." They nevertheless counseled patience and advocated "letting the mind of Christ rule our hearts and minds" in relation to persons with whom there was disagreement. Such action pre-

¹Kansas Conference, Minutes (1955), p. 102; (1956), pp. 113-116; (1958), pp. 143-145; New England Conference, ibid. (1960), pp. 126-127; (1957), pp. 116-117; New York Conference, ibid. (1959), p. 169; and Red River Valley Conference, ibid. (1959), p. 124.

²Texas Conference, ibid. (1956), p. 15.

³See supra, p. 278.

supposed, of course, that Christ would be patient under such circumstances. The resolution further supported "peace and concord" in the respective communities and urged that "extreme care" be taken "in regard to associating with groups that have as their purpose the advancement of any side of the question of desegregation by propaganda or agitation." In fact, people were urged to refrain from participation "in any demonstrations that would tend to rouse violent emotions or precipitate crises." Sit-ins were to be out for Augustana Lutherans in Texas. Moreover, members were urged to refuse support to any group advocating violence or coercion of any kind. Instead, support was asked for the forces of moderation and people were urged "to welcome people in their communities into their fellowship without prejudice to race or color, in accordance with the constitution of the congregation."¹ The welcome was thus limited by local option. However, the forthright action taken nationally had likely helped large numbers of Augustana members to see a new responsibility toward people of other races. While the action of the 40's and 50's had likely been tardy and required prodding from the courts, it can nevertheless be conjectured that the action which did eventuate helped mold the public conscience for the 60's.

Intersynodical Influence Concerning Marriage,
Divorce, and Planned Parenthood

Early action by Augustana in this area followed traditional patterns. In 1947, the Commission on Morals and Social Problems proposed some additions to previous positions adopted by Augustana regarding marriage and divorce. Among the proposals brought to the national con-

¹Texas Conference, Minutes (1956), p. 20.

vention that year was a suggestion that divorced persons be summoned before the council of the local congregation. If the council determined that such persons had been guilty of any sin leading to the divorce and had not repented of the same, the council was to suspend or excommunicate any such person. It was further suggested that the synod forbid congregations to receive a divorced person into membership so long as the local church council had evidence that such a person had sinned in such a way as to contribute to the divorce and had failed to repent. The convention voted to receive the report, an action short of adoption.¹

In 1953, the Commission on Morals and Social Problems recommended to the Augustana convention a statement on planned parenthood prepared by the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference. The conference statement was almost entirely the work of Dr. Carl F. Reuss of the American Lutheran Church.² The 1953 Augustana convention voted to defer action for one year and to refer the statement for discussion in the church, particularly at pastoral conferences.³

When Augustana met for its annual convention in 1954, the delegates had before them a somewhat revised statement entitled responsible parenthood. The statement was adopted. Despite the revisions, the basic sections sanctioning birth control reflected Reuss' work and were almost identical in wording to the statement adopted that same year by the ALC Board for Christian Social Action. For example, aside from the shifting of some definite and indefinite articles, both statements included this sentence: "the means which a married pair uses to determine

¹Augustana, Minutes (1947), pp. 326-328.

²See supra, pp. 266ff.

³Augustana, Minutes (1953), pp. 305-307.

the number and the spacing of the births of their children are a matter for them to decide with their own consciences, on the basis of competent medical advice and in a sense of accountability to God." Similarly, both statements said that "so long as it causes no harm to those involved, either immediately or over an extended period, none of the methods for controlling the number and spacing of the births of children has any special moral merit or demerit."¹

The treatment of the two statements differed, however, on one important point. Augustana adopted the report as an official statement of the church, whereas in the ALC, the statement was circulated within the church only with the endorsement of the Board for Christian Social Action.

One of the ironies of the developments was that in recognition of Augustana's action on this topic, the World Council of Churches appointed A. D. Mattson to a committee studying the population explosion.² In fact, when the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council met at Oxford in 1959, the 1954 resolution of the Augustana Church and a 1958 Lambeth Conference statement were hailed "as the most mature and helpful expressions yet made regarding the relationship of religion and the churches to the problem of planned parenthood and the world's population explosion."³ In the course of these de-

¹Augustana, Minutes (1954), pp. 229-230. For ALC statement, see supra, pp. 266ff. See also Minutes, Commission on Morals and Social Problems, January 15, 1954, p. 1. It should also be noted that the New York Conference voted to ask the 1954 national convention to adopt the planned parenthood statement. See New York Conference, Minutes (1954), p. 176.

²Interview with K. E. Mattson, July 25, 1963.

³Arden, Augustana Heritage, p. 368.

velopments, the pioneer work of Dr. Reuss was somewhat overlooked. When Mattson, for example, re-published his Christian Ethics in 1947, he had taken no stand on the question of birth control. Yet at about that same time, Reuss was endorsing the position Augustana was later to adopt, and early in 1948 was having his remarks circulated within the ALC.¹ In the course of Augustana's action, however, despite her care to note that the statement being adopted was derived from the American Lutheran Conference, Reuss' personal contribution went largely unnoticed. Nevertheless, the breakthrough at this point in both churches can only be said to express a further developing social consciousness among Lutherans in America.

Such action by Augustana reflected a sharp reversal in thinking. In 1930, the editors of Lutheran Companion had written that it was unnecessary to restrict population out of fear that the offspring could not comfortably be supported. Moreover, the writers reported that the widespread practice of birth control in Germany and Austria had actually caused unemployment because of a decreased demand for children's shoes. "No reduction in population by means of birth control is going to bring about an economic millenium for mankind. No conscious and persistent disregard of natural and divine laws will cause betterment of individual and national conditions," the editors wrote. They reported both President Knubel of the ULCA and President Brandelle of Augustana were opposed to the practice.²

¹Christian Ethics, pp. 296-299. See also supra, pp. 267ff.

²"The Question of Birth Control," Lutheran Companion, November 15, 1930, pp. 1444-1445; "A Widespread Practice of Birth Control," ibid., March 29, 1930, p. 389; and "Protestants and Birth Control," ibid., May 30, 1931, pp. 676-677.

Augustana at the End of an Era

The evidence does suggest that Augustana continued to develop a broadening sense of social responsibility during this period. Her focus of attention on war, race, and the population explosion, for example, suggest that she was confronting the major social questions of the day. The influences at work in Augustana during the first period continued also during the second, with even greater intensity.¹ The complete Americanization of the church, its greater urbanization, its fuller participation in the ecumenical movement,² its response to the theological developments at home and abroad, and its direct response to issues bearing down on the minds of men in almost all parts of the nation were the chief catalysts in the continued forward movement toward greater social responsibility in Augustana.

If key persons were to be cited, one would have to name A. D. Mattson, who continued not only as professor of ethics at Augustana seminary during this entire period, but also as chairman of the Commission on Morals and Social Problems, later renamed the Commission on Social Action. In addition to the influence of Mattson, the strong support of President Oscar A. Benson must be noted. During this period, a national assembly of the Augustana Church was not complete without a debate on some social issue of importance to the day.

In reviewing the data in Augustana, one is struck by the fact that the Augustana Church seemed to be more free and less bound to tradition than either the ELC or the ALC, despite the tradition-

¹See supra, pp. 146ff.

²It should be noted that Augustana joined the National Council of Churches as a charter member when that body came into being in 1950.

shattering stance of many ALC positions. This is illustrated, for example, by the fact that the Augustana Church referred much less frequently to biblical quotations in putting together its policy statements than did the ALC. The latter tended to weight almost every paragraph with copious biblical references, chiefly from the New Testament.

Augustana, on the one hand, while referring to the Bible often, did not seem bound to quote it in order to validate every opinion expressed. She frequently appealed to what might be termed a moral sensitivity on the part of the persons addressed. In doing so, she was perhaps unconsciously expressing the fact that this kind of social sensitivity ran deeper among her clergy and laity than it did in the ALC. On the other hand, lacking a full time secretary for its Commission on Morals and Social Problems, the statements which Augustana adopted were sometimes not as carefully prepared. Augustana's borrowing of the work of Reuss with respect to planned parenthood is a case in point.

Dr. Karl E. Mattson, president of Augustana Seminary, argued that the Augustana Church reflected a greater sensitivity to social issues than any other Lutheran church in America, including the ULCA. He posted Augustana in first place, he said, because that body was more homogenous than the ULCA, as a result of which Augustana as a whole took more advanced ground with respect to social issues than the ULCA.¹ Mattson's argument concerning homogeneity is not without merit. The reading of the minutes of the various conferences does not bear him out, however. The expressed social consciousness by these organized groups was at least as spotty as that in the ULCA synods, perhaps even more so. Most of the action in Augustana was taken by the California, Illinois, Kansas, New

¹Interview with Karl E. Mattson, July 25, 1963.

England, and New York conferences. Yet it should be noted that, in all likelihood, no church will ever be so homogenous as to move forward monolithically decade after decade. Hence the presence of an "avant garde" among the conferences does not detract from the achievement of a highly developed sense of social responsibility throughout the Augustana Lutheran Church.

In taking a new position of social responsibility, Augustana, like the ALC and ULCA, was able to do so without forfeiting a long-held viewpoint among American Lutherans. That viewpoint was that the individual must be reached with the gospel prior to environmental reform. Augustana no longer, however, drove a sharp dichotomy between these two concerns. Both were functions of the church. Out of this double conviction, one can say with historian G. Everett Arden that "a significant development of social consciousness has occurred within the Augustana Church, particularly during the last twenty-five years of its corporate existence."¹

¹Augustana Heritage, p. 378.

CHAPTER IX
THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Introduction

The most urbanized, the most Americanized, and the most ecumenical of the four Lutheran bodies under study was the United Lutheran Church in America. This church also had the most highly developed sense of social responsibility.

A case can be made that the Augustana Lutheran Church stood very close to the ULCA in each of these areas of comparison and that Augustana even surpassed the latter.¹ Both churches were fairly equally urbanized,² which fact tended to make both of them less parochial. Both had been thoroughly Americanized prior to the end of World War II. Both joined the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam and the National Council of Churches when it was organized in 1950. Both participated actively and drew from the discussion in these ecumenical relationships. Both adopted position papers on key social issues during this period. Both reflected approximately the same level of social concern on the conference and synod levels. Both had journals which regularly brought discussion of social issues into member homes. Moreover, leaders in both churches were constantly at work seeking to cultivate, deepen, and broaden those developments concerning social responsibility which had

¹See supra, p. 344.

²See supra, p. 207.

already appeared.

Nevertheless, when those comparisons have been made, there appear to be at least three significant differences, all of which suggest that the ULCA held a somewhat advanced position over the sister church with whom she merged in 1962. These areas relate to a quest for a new social ethic, the organized leadership which the national body gave to the social action movement, and the tone, style, breadth, and completeness of the position papers adopted.

With respect to the first of these areas, it has been noted that Augustana also sought a new basis for social ethics. In that body, however, this quest reflected the desire of individuals acting independently on their own initiative. In the ULCA, by contrast, this effort was the result of a formal, official decision of the church body.¹ With respect to the second area, it is sufficient to note that throughout the entire period under study, Augustana operated in the field of social action without even a part-time paid executive, whereas the ULCA Board of Social Missions fielded a small but highly competent staff. This fact related to the third area, namely that the position papers adopted by the ULCA were more carefully prepared and displayed greater breadth and style.²

¹See *infra*, p. 367.

²The fact that the social missions board had a competent staff does not mean that the board was able to impose its will on the ULCA. On the contrary, as this chapter will illustrate, delegates to ULCA conventions often altered the board's positions and on occasion rejected them. Thus the positions adopted by the ULCA can be said to reflect the will of the convention rather than the influence of a smooth board overpowering the constituency. In point of comparison it should be noted that the ALC also had a highly competent leader in the person of Dr. Carl Reuss, but he did not get the theological support for his work that developed for similar efforts in both Augustana and the ULCA.

One might divide the factors behind the developing social consciousness in the ULCA during the period from 1945 to 1960 into two groups: social and theological-ecclesiastical. Of the two, the first seems to have been the more important factor, without which the second need not have developed.

Franklin Koch, social missions executive secretary, reflected this feature in a statement made to the December, 1945, meeting of his board. At that time Koch reported that "increasingly as I go about the church I am asked for statements, pamphlets, outlines, judgments on our perplexing social questions. We cannot for too long refuse to recognize these needs and to answer them."¹ What he was stating was a thesis concerning the rise of a social consciousness which some historians have expounded, namely, that society forces the hand of theology, not vice versa.² Society in this case named the issues: nuclear war, race, the population explosion, and to a less sharp degree, labor relations at the beginning of the era and capital punishment at the end of the period. In another age, the question might have been monopolies. In a future age, the question might be water or clean air. But for this age, the big three were arms, race, and sex. The church did not choose the issues, she responded to them. A live and socially responsible church would do just that.

In separate interviews with Dr. Harold Haas, who succeeded Franklin Koch as executive secretary of the social missions board, and with the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, who was ULCA's second social action secretary, each of the men gave similar reasons for the rise of a sense

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, December 13, 1945, p. 11.

²See supra, p. 1.

of social responsibility within the ULCA. Both listed the fact that the ULCA had become Americanized, thus confronting the same problems as other Americans. Both named the impact of world problems, especially World War II and the present nuclear threat to survival. Both listed theological factors, especially the influence of Luther research and the impact of the studies leading to the preparation of a three-volume series published by Muhlenberg Press under the guidance of the Board of Social Missions. Speaking in 1962, both men could talk with justice of a theological development and undergirding. The social factors, however, had preceded the theological factors so far as influence within the ULCA was concerned.¹

Within the matrix of the theological-ecclesiastical developments, there seem to have been four key instruments through which the new developments flowed to influence the ULCA. These were the social mission board and its staff, the ecumenical movement, key theological professors, and the journalists. All of these were interrelated. The influence of the ecumenical movement, for example, was reflected in the actions of the other three and therefore will not be described separately. Of the remaining triple instruments--the board, the professors, and the journalists--the actions of the Board of Social Missions are of special importance since that group was officially charged by the ULCA to help develop a greater social consciousness.

The ULCA had been concerned in an official manner about the relationship of social action to theology even prior to World War II. Hence in 1938 she had established the Board of Social Missions, which

¹Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962 and with the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, January 17, 1962.

included the functions of evangelism, institutional welfare, and social action, in order to give a theological balance to her witness. To be sure, the functions of evangelism and welfare received the earliest special attention of the board.¹ Nevertheless, the social action structure did exist, latent, within which the ULCA could move forward in this area. During the period from 1945 to 1960, social action got the official green light. Like any fairly new effort, it can be described as a quest, and like most quests, the pattern was not always consistent. The search, nevertheless, was a self-conscious effort to be socially responsible.

In 1947, after first having chosen an associate director of evangelism, the social missions board called Rev. Harold Letts to be the first secretary for social action in ULCA history.² Letts had served parishes in Jersey City, New Jersey and Jamaica, New York. He had studied at Colgate University and Union Theological Seminary where he had been especially influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr. At the time of his election, he was working toward a master's degree in theology at the

¹See *supra*, pp. 176ff. In the interviews with Dr. Harold Haas and Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, both men responded to the question, "why was there no 'crash program' for social action similar to that for evangelism in the mid 50's?" Dr. Haas replied by saying that the ULCA was simply following a national trend among many denominations at that time to develop highly structured evangelism programs. Moreover, he said, it was easier to structure an evangelism program than a social action plan and that there was greater support in the ULCA for an evangelism campaign than a social action drive. Pastor Cornelsen responded by saying that social responsibility was geared for depth, not mass appeal, as in the case of evangelism. Moreover, he suggested that it was easier to involve a church in a program of evangelism where the institution generally tended to gain, at least in members, from such effort. On the other hand, it was more difficult to involve an institution in an effort to expend herself on what was termed "God's work in the world." Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962 and with the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, January 17, 1962.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, February 14, 1946, p. 5; and May 9, 1947, pp. 13-15.

Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He reported to the board that he was taking courses from Dr. O. F. Nolde concerning education for social responsibility and from Dr. Theodore Tappert involving the study of biographies of social gospel leaders.¹

The job description which the board provided Letts was outlined to the ULCA convention in the fall of 1946. The description called for research to provide the church with facts concerning social issues and for exploration of methods to combat social ills, crystallize public opinion, secure proper legislation, and awaken what was termed the social conscience of the community. In addition, the secretary for social action was to publish the results of his research, formulate statements on social issues for consideration by the church, as well as counsel and guide groups within the church concerning positions taken by the church on given issues. The board further envisioned that the social secretary would initiate seminars and institutes throughout the ULCA to stimulate interest and to guide and improve social action already under way.²

It was clear from the job analysis that the ULCA anticipated a broader scope for its social action than either the ALC or Augustana.³ Not only was attention to be given toward directing the church in its stance on social issues, but also to the public by striving for a public consensus on issues and by working through the channels of state to procure desired legislation. The entire action was designed to break up

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 13, 1947, p. 15.

²ULCA, Minutes (1946), pp. 456 and 457; and Minutes, Board of Social Missions, May 9, 1946, p. 16.

³See supra, pp. 103 and 120.

further the influence of quietism within the Lutheran church and to activate a broader social concern. In his first report to the social action board, Letts could report that he found "a lively interest in social action in certain areas of the church" and no opposition to board plans to expand the program.¹ Whatever quietism was therefore still alive appears to have been relatively inarticulate at this point.

Four areas of the ULCA's efforts in the field of social action will be examined: first, the effort to restate a theological ethic; second, specific statements or resolutions adopted nationally and regionally on the issues of war and peace, race, and sex and marriage; third, additional efforts of the social missions board as catalyst in the continuing development of social responsibility; and fourth, the contribution of journalism to stimulate social awareness.

Toward A Restatement of Ethical Theory

Certain words and concepts emerge to the fore with a steady repetitiveness as one reviews the effort to restate a Lutheran ethic. These words include created orders, two realms or kingdoms, law and gospel, faith active in love, Christian vocation, and the poles of faith and facts of life.

Because of a similarity in terminology to that of the Reformation, it would appear that an old ethic was restated rather than a new one created. The writers were careful, however, to disassociate their understanding of these terms from such persons as Ernst Troeltsch and Reinhold Niebuhr, as well as from what might variously be called later Lutheranism. Instead they identified with recent Reformation research

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 13, 1947, p. 14.

in the tradition of Karl Holl and the Scandinavians whom Edgar Carlson brought to the attention of Augustana. In addition, positive identification was frequently made with Wilhelm Pauck's description of Luther's faith in The Heritage of the Reformation.

In addition to the openness to Reformation research, new work, from the standpoint of American Lutheranism, was done by Joseph Sittler. He wrote about the non-propositional nature of Christian ethics and of the necessity for ethical decision to take place between the poles of what he termed faith and the facts of life under the dynamic influence of God. The newer approach was best illustrated in a modified way by Harold Haas in his essay on marriage and the family. It was similarly illustrated by some of the later statements of the social missions board, as will be shown, especially those concerning nuclear war and marriage. Each sought desperately to use both familiar and new words in ways the writer thought were socially responsible.

In the ELC, there had been almost no signs of development in the area of ethical theory. In the ALC, social action leaders addressed themselves to the church by marching forward copious references to the Bible. In Augustana, efforts had pointed in two directions. One sought to weld a social gospel theology of the Rauschenbusch era to the Bible, or vice versa. The other sought to move back to Luther. In the ULCA, the most self-conscious effort seems to have been to relate the development of a social consciousness to Luther and to the Bible.

During the very meeting at which Letts was called to be the first social action secretary, the Board of Social Missions voted to recommend the publication of a five-volume study series on social

issues.¹ Because of the time which Letts was called to devote to other areas of social action activity, however, the completion of the publishing venture was delayed for ten years, during which time the plans were revised. The completed document involved a three-volume study entitled Christian Social Responsibility. The production of these volumes brought together both members of the social missions board and key professors who jointly, under board auspices, conducted the study.

The general outline of the work is significant. It begins with an examination of the context for contemporary life. Then it moves to an examination of what is termed "The Lutheran Heritage." Finally it ends with a volume which attempts to restate the structure of Christian ethics and the relation of such an ethic to culture in general, the state, marriage, and economics. The movement is from the world to the resources of faith and back to what are termed the structures of society. The volumes seem to combine a kind of contextualism with an understanding of faith active in love, the two kingdoms, and created structures. There does not, however, appear to be uniform agreement whether all those ideas properly belong to a particular ethic or how they are to be related if they do belong.² Nevertheless, the effort on the part of some writers to relate these ideas may be said to be new for American Lutheranism.

Volume I, subtitled "Existence Today," contains four essays which attempt to analyze the multiplicity of economic, political, philo-

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, May 9, 1947, p. 13.

²See infra, p. 444.

sophical, psychological, and sociological forces which influence life in mid-twentieth century America. In the final chapter, Martin Heinecken, professor at Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia, pictured man existing in a serious predicament:

He is on the one hand a part of nature and its chain of determinacies; on the other hand he stands outside of that chain in the transcendence of his freedom. With the mystery of his will he can break into the chain and control his destiny, as it would appear to him, absolutely. But then again, he is absolutely frustrated. There are the determinacies of nature, there are the competing wills of others, there is fate, there is death, and over all is the threat of meaninglessness.¹

Man lives in a series of broken relationships. Love provides the possibility for a human being to become aware of himself and restore those relationships. To love is to know what it means to be a man. Therein also true community is born, Heinecken wrote.²

Volume II, subtitled "The Lutheran Heritage," represents an attempt to trace historically the development of Lutheran attitudes toward society. Dr. Jerald Brauer, Dean of the Federated Theological Faculty at the University of Chicago, discussed Luther and the Reformation. Brauer said that Luther exhibited a "real sense of social responsibility" as early as the publication of the Ninety-Five Theses, the Leipzig debate, and the three famous tracts of 1520. Those who would argue that Luther contradicts himself and has no consistent point of view toward social issues are distorting Luther, Brauer maintained. On the contrary, he asserted, "Luther's theological presuppositions are, in themselves, as realistic and adequate a basis for social responsibility

¹"False Hopes and the Gospel" in Christian Social Responsibility I: Existence Today, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), p. 119.

²Ibid., pp. 125 and 147.

as one can find in social history."¹

At the center, Brauer said, stood Luther's understanding of the dynamic presence in all of life of the God who in Christ reveals his heart and will of love to man and seeks out man to bestow on him the forgiveness of his sins.² From that basis emerged a personal, trusting faith, produced by the Word of God, which, according to Brauer, "becomes the center of life out of which flows man's good works of social consciousness" altruistically directed towards one's neighbor as he actually exists in a given context.

This ethic, Brauer said, was not limited to personal relationships but embraced "the totality of society."

A true concern for the neighbor himself drives a man to take into consideration that neighbor's total involvement [*sic*] or, in other words, the entire community in which he lives. One cannot be satisfied simply with alleviating his immediate personal needs, though this must be done. The point is that a Christian cannot stop his ethical responsibility just by bringing temporary immediate relief to one in need. The man of faith must consider what has brought his neighbor to this plight and what must be done so that he is no longer misused.³

Brauer believed that Luther made a major contribution toward social ethics in terms of vocation:

Once a Christian is called by God to trust in His mercy, the believer then experiences this goodness and grace of God in everything about him. In light of this gift, Luther pleads with men to be faithful and diligent in their life's work. One's occupation and the various relationships in which one lives--husband, father, wife or mother--all become places and ways in which the Christian can express his gratitude to and faith in God. Called to a life in faith and trust, the Christian lives out this calling, not in

¹Jerald Brauer, "Luther and Reformation" in Christian Social Responsibility II: The Lutheran Heritage, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 4-5.

²Ibid., pp. 6-8.

³Ibid., pp. 10-15.

special religious acts or occupations, but in the midst of the life where God has found him. Hence, all of life, if lived from the proper source and perspective, is a call from God.¹

Commenting on the various studies which have been made concerning the economic consequences of such a view of vocation, Brauer wrote that "of all the conclusions, one at least cannot be refuted. The doctrine of the call worked out by Luther once more restored labor, and all so-called secular occupations, to a place of respectability and provided the laborer with a motive for doing a good and honest job."²

Luther had also held, Brauer argued, that "all structures of life, nature itself, are channels of the divine presence--not potentially but actually." The structures were given by God "to order, sustain life, and promote tranquility and security," Brauer said. Later Lutheranism, aided by Luther's conservatism, tended to view the doctrine of vocation and the givenness of the social structures as an endorsement of the status quo, Brauer contended. But he argued that Luther in his use of such ideas was not referring to

specific social arrangements of the day or to structures which can never be altered in any way. His real concern was with the series of relationships and arrangements which were operative in life. These are given in history. . . Here is where God meets man, here is where the Christian must show forth love to neighbor.³

Brauer conceded that the idea had at times become static but contended that it need not have done so:

¹Brauer, in Christian Social Responsibility II, p. 17. This particular form of footnote for these volumes will be used throughout this paper. After a first complete reference, the last name of the author, the name for the series, plus the volume number and page numbers will be used. Ibid. is used according to its regular usage.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 19-22.

Insofar as man, within the orders, is responsible to God's law and is motivated by faith working through love, there is a twofold basis on which change could develop. God is a living God breaking through the structures of life fulfilling his will in and through men. . . . Also, the man of faith loving his neighbor as found in the orders of life is certain to seek a fuller application of God's law within those orders. This leads to a creative and not to a static view of the orders of life. The Christian must constantly seek new ways to realize God's will for the neighbor's welfare.¹

Such a faith, Brauer maintained, did not lead to "irresponsible individualism, but directly to personal responsibility to God and neighbor in community."²

At a point where Luther has been sharply criticized, namely, his concept of the state and earthly authority, Brauer came to Luther's staunchest defense. He called this area one of Luther's "richest contributions to social thinking" and said the critics had misunderstood Luther. Brauer said that Luther provided the theological and religious basis for breaking the state free from papal control and for restoring it to its legitimate place in the totality of life. This had been made possible by the articulation of the two kingdom theory. The spiritual kingdom, grounded in the Word, made possible God's persuasive confrontation of man; whereas the secular kingdom, grounded in what was called God's creative activity, enabled the securing of centers of power in a community to insure peace and justice, Brauer maintained. But neither the norm nor the authority for the temporal government came from the spiritual kingdom, Brauer said, thus asserting the independence from each other of the two realms over which God's sovereignty was said to reign. As Brauer described it, the government's norm was "the law of

¹Brauer, in Christian Social Responsibility II, pp. 22-23.

²Ibid., p. 23.

love as embodied in the form of justice. It is the law of creation which underlies all attempts of the state to work out a system of justice.

The object of the worldly government is to restrain evil and injustice and to promote peace and harmony."¹ Even the state, therefore, by restraining evil to make possible acts of love toward the neighbor, performed a service of love, Brauer argued, terming it "another of the grand concepts worked out by Luther."²

Brauer contended that Reinhold Niebuhr and Ernst Troeltsch had misunderstood Luther's ethic. Far from being a "cultural defeatism," Luther's ethic was realistic and dynamic, Brauer said. It was realistic in that it held that the Christian man continued in sin, thus avoiding perfectionism and utopianism. It was dynamic in that the life of faith was a life of continually overcoming evil, both personal and social, Brauer continued:

There is, then, no need for a synthesis between the Renaissance doctrine of the infinite possibilities of man and the Reformation doctrine of the perversion by self-interest of every act of man. On the basis of the Reformation reinterpretation of Christian faith there is given a concrete formulation of the active life of faith which is ever moving and creative, working out the will of God in all structures of life, though never perfectly identifying his will with the particular action or method employed. Thus it produces a true cultural responsibility growing out of a faith which is related to all human attempts for justice. Yet it never rests secure or self-satisfied in what has been achieved.³

Brauer sought not only to state what he understood Luther's ethic to be. He also consciously sought to sort out Luther's position from what were termed later distortions, such as the endorsement of the status

¹Brauer, in Christian Social Responsibility, II, pp. 24-27.

²Ibid., p. 31.

³Ibid., p. 33.

quo as a consequence of affirming divine orders in creation. Moreover, he implied that, restored to its original dynamic, Luther's ethic would provide a sufficient base from which the church and individual Christians could act in an ethically responsible manner. Such a basis would have to be strongly theocentric. It would affirm the dynamic presence of God who works in all structures of society, either by law or by gospel, to make them and the persons in these relationships responsible to him. It would involve an understanding of faith as a trust in God's mercy for which a Christian would thankfully involve himself in service to his neighbor. It would involve a doctrine of vocation which would view all so-called secular activity as the God-appointed arena within which to respond in faithfulness and love to God's call to faith and service. It would always view man, including all his schemes for social betterment, as sinful and in need of redemption, but it would also see him as one freed by the mercy of God to penetrate the world in a fresh burst of service on behalf of order, justice, peace, and well-being. Brauer sought, therefore, not to chart new ground, but to call the church back to what he considered an older stance well worth regaining.

In the same volume as Brauer's essay, Dr. Theodore Tappert, professor at the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia, traced Lutheran history through orthodoxy, pietism, and rationalism. He, however, did not summon the church to return to any of them in their old forms. He criticized orthodoxy for its call of obedience to the state and said that the "ethical paralysis" of that movement had sometimes appeared in later Lutheranism. He traced the concern for personal charity which appeared initially under orthodox auspices but which later dissipated into what was described as police measures toward orphans, widows and

beggars. He showed how pietism under Jacob Spener and August Francke gave charity fresh and lasting impetus so that it became an active part of the Lutheran heritage. While the pietists did more works of charity than the orthodoxists, "it needs to be observed" Tappert continued, that such works

were to a large extent individualistic, a private matter of individual Christians. . . . It was not sufficiently appreciated that charity is a task for the whole church. Besides, the works of charity characteristic of that period were still remedial, healing the wounds of the afflicted rather than uncovering and dealing with the causes of social wrong.¹

Dr. Tappert further characterized pietism as austere in its attitude toward the world, as a consequence of which it avoided so-called worldly pleasures and considered such acts as dancing, opera, comedy, and theatre as evil and the use of such items as tobacco and alcohol to be at least questionable. This tradition too was adopted by some later Lutherans and formed a part of America's Lutheran heritage. While pietists were said to have submitted as uncritically to the state as the orthodox did, the former were nevertheless credited with a "conspicuous achievement" in their reform of the schools in that they helped make schooling available to more people and made the teaching less content-centered and more experience-centered. In addition, Tappert observed that the warmth of the pietistic personal relationship had tended to soften the existing rigid family patriarchy and had given "fresh emphasis" to the "equality of men and women before God."²

The rationalist movement was credited with continuing the concern of pietism for education and charity. Obedience to the state was

¹Theodore Tappert, in Christian Social Responsibility II, p. 75.

²Ibid., pp. 76-79.

considered a Christian virtue. Contrary to the orthodoxists and pietists, the rationalists no longer regarded work as punishment for sin, although they thought manual labor was inferior and thus they contributed to class distinctions, Tappert said. Rationalist clergymen were said to have supported programs to overcome filth, improve health, and increase production in agriculture and industry. They also preached sermons on the culture of bees and the benefits of vaccination. "Such preaching was relevant to the times and expressed the relation of Christianity to life, but it was no longer proclamation of the gospel," Tappert said.¹

Dr. E. Theodore Bachmann, then professor at the Lutheran Seminary in Berkeley, California, traced 19th century developments chiefly in European Lutheranism. He saw the stance generally as strongly individualistic and conservative. Creative work was done in the field of charity through such persons as Johann Wichern and Theodore Fliedner who made the work of Inner Missions, deacon, and deaconess institutes famous throughout Europe.²

In the final essay of Volume II, Dr. Howard Hong, professor at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, analyzed movements in 20th century theology. He spoke of the charge of quietism against Lutherans and said that insofar as the charge was justified, "it must be directed at a faithlessness and obscurantism rather than at an intrinsic theo-

¹Tappert, in Christian Social Responsibility II, pp. 83-85.

²E. T. Bachmann, "The Church and the Rise of Modern Society" in Christian Social Responsibility II: The Lutheran Heritage, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 89-137.

logical defect." He saw contemporary Lutheranism expressing ethical vigor and attributed this largely to a recovery of Reformation emphasis and the impact of such men as Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr.¹

The series climaxed with Volume III, subtitled Life in Community, in which an effort was made to chart a path for mid-twentieth century Lutherans. Chapters were devoted to the structure of Christian ethics, faith and culture, faith and the economic life, faith and the political order, faith and family life, and the church as community and mission.

In the chapter dealing with the structure of Christian ethics, Joseph Sittler, then professor at Chicago Lutheran Seminary, seems to point in a direction a bit different from that which Brauer described as Luther's. Sittler started where Brauer said Luther began: the dynamic presence of God in the midst of all of human life. But Sittler did not move out into created orders or two kingdoms. He seemed to wish to avoid the former in order to provide more freedom--both for God and men--and to avoid the latter in order to prevent the polarities of sacred and secular which sometimes had accompanied the two kingdom concept. He also seemed determined to avoid both biblicism and the legalism of a new canon law. His attention remained focused on the dynamic of God who is everywhere active in the world giving of himself--to the Hebrews, in Christ, to the present world--providing even the response he desires from men. Even such categories as propositions and principles seemed limiting to Sittler, so he discarded them. "The truth of Christianity is neither abstract nor propositional" and "is intrinsically incapable of transmission in terms of principles." To do so, Sittler charged, would be to

¹Howard Hong, "Liberalism and Lutheran Reconstruction" in Christian Social Responsibility II: The Lutheran Heritage, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 174 and 138-177. See also supra, pp. 231ff. for a fuller statement of Hong's view.

"make once and for all disposable, and to cool into palpable ingots of duty, the living stuff of love--and so dismiss the Holy One 'with whom we have to do.'" Jesus, Sittler asserted, repudiated principles in favor of a vital pattern of response. Instead of a philosophical or a theological system, Jesus had a "style," Sittler continued.¹

Jesus in his teaching did not attempt a systematization or exhaustive coverage of all areas of human behavior. He did not, after the manner proper to philosophers of the good, attempt to articulate general principles which, once stated, have then only to be beat out in correlaries applicable to the variety of human life. He speaks rather of God and of man and of the human community in a relational and living way. On the way, in the course of his speech, he swoops down, now here, now there, picks up some detail, situation, instance of human pathos, error, or pride, holds it up for a moment and then moves on.²

This "occasional" character of the speech and acts of Jesus focuses man's attention to the God relationship rather than to a set of propositions and adjusts one's ear to the living voice and work of Christ, Sittler argued. It is to this living voice of Christ that man in his given situation must now respond, Sittler contended. Universal "oughts" seem to have been rejected in favor of immediate, situational imperatives.

The kingdom of God is not a plan, or a program, or a concept, or an idea. It is a force within whose grip every man is caught; a grip never loosened, but rather having its ultimacy illustrated by every moral achievement and approximate obedience. It is a force, a Godly fascination, a veritable imago Dei engraved upon man's social history.³

Sittler designated the obedient response of man to the dynamic God as faith, not love. This faith was not an assent to propositions,

¹Joseph L. Sittler, "The Structure of Christian Ethics" in Christian Social Responsibility III: Life in Community, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), p. 16.

²Ibid., p. 17.

³Ibid., p. 19.

which definition Sittler greatly feared. It was rather a God-given response in which God's love for the Christian could come to life.

The believer is commanded to love, to be sure, but this love is formed in faith, just as the love of God who is in heaven is communicated in the faith-demanding historical deed of Jesus. The continuity of the love wherewith we are loved and the love we are commanded to exercise passes through the passion of faith. Only in this way can the relation of God's love for man and this loved-man's love for his fellow man be made clear and persuasive. For faith alone can rescue from nonsense the command to love. Nothing is more certain than that love cannot be commanded. If love nevertheless is commanded by Jesus, then some life-transforming new relationship in virtue of which the absurdity is overcome must exist. And precisely such a convulsive event in the God-relationship is the central declaration of the gospel. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he first loved us. . . ." Faith is here presented as a function of the love of God; it is a term descriptive of how man, now that God has taken the initiative, can be newly related to him.

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As the New Testament unfolds, we see that faith is the name given that surrendering obedience-from-below which permits itself henceforth to have its life fashioned by this given love of God from above. . . . Faith is the name for the new God-relationship whereby the will of God who himself establishes the relationship is made actual. And that will is love. Faith active in love is alone faith, and love is the function of faith horizontally just as prayer is the function of faith vertically.¹

Every arena--space, human relationships, social structures--comprises the field in which the gospel of redemption penetrates. Therefore Sittler warned against dividing ethics into individual and social categories--man was created for community--and also against withdrawing from the forms in which Christians find themselves. Lutheran pietism in particular was vulnerable to the latter, he said. Instead the gospel beckoned into and penetrated the entire world, Sittler wrote.²

The will of God, the specific content of man's faith active in love, is disclosed to man in ever new and fresh ways as the individual in his actual situation is confronted by Christ and is obedient to the

¹Sittler, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 22-23.

²Ibid., pp. 23-26.

love disclosed. Hence Sittler can say there was no need for principles. Moreover, by denying that the will of God was identical with the ten commandments, Sittler took a position opposite from that taken by Edgar Carlson, for example, in the Augustana Lutheran Church.¹ According to Sittler, instead of reacting to commandments and principles, man responds to God's love in terms of faith active in love in the midst of life.

Christian ethical decision is generated between the two poles of faith and the facts of life. Each of these acts upon the other; facts act upon faith to reveal to it the forms available as its field of action; faith acts upon facts to discover their meaning and peril and promise for men.²

In these human situations, in which man responds obediently to God, faith will unceasingly take on social responsibility in terms of the family, state, and economics--indeed in relation to the whole of culture, Sittler maintained. In each situation, "pragmatic choices . . . fraught with inadequacy, pain, and denial" must be made. To be crucified with Christ "is a symbol of the inner content of numberless ethical decisions in their actual heartbreaking character," he asserted. For there is "no human fact in which sin is not involved. But within some structures of fact there are live, free, and operative forces of grace, insights of elemental justice, re-creating energies of love."³

Thus Christian ethics, which emerges from what God gives, according to Sittler, invites the Christian to accept what God has given as creator: "the world with its needs, problems, and possibilities." He is invited to accept what God offers as redeemer: "the earth and all

¹See supra, pp. 297ff.

²Sittler, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 30.

³Ibid., pp. 36-37.

human life as the place where God's glory became flesh" and the ethical life as "the birth pangs attending the new being . . ." He is invited to accept what God offers as Holy Spirit: "the gifts that God gives from above, and the tasks which he gives in the world around."¹

Sittler's position and that of the Board of Social Missions do not appear to be clear at this point. Sittler said that Christianity and Christian ethics were not propositional. Yet some of his statements appear to be propositional. For example: "Nothing is more certain than that love cannot be commanded." Similarly he said Christian ethics involve no principles. Yet "love" seems to have some kind of normative function which a principle might express. One therefore is left with the question: what does Sittler mean by the terms "propositional" and "principle?" How does he understand himself?²

There is also difficulty concerning the action of the Board of Social Missions. At the 1948 convention of the ULCA when the publication of a series on ethics was authorized, the delegates had voted to recommend:

A scholarly study, which may eventuate in a definitive book, of the Lutheran approach to Christian social responsibility. This book should bring together and clarify the full teachings of Scripture on this subject, the witness of our confessions thereto, and all the pertinent pronouncements of the ULCA. Its chief purpose would be to school Lutherans in the Scriptural and confessional grounds for social action. A study book growing out of this study would be desirable for use by laymen.³

The enterprise to publish a "definitive book" seems to have anticipated

¹Sittler, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 38.

²Sittler published the same views the following year in a book entitled The Structure of Ethics (Baton Rouge, 1958).

³ULCA, Minutes (1948), p. 302.

the setting forth of some propositions or principles. Moreover, the board was involved all during the 50's in drawing up a series of propositions and principles and they continued to do so even after publishing Sittler's essay. The board's style was often precise and specific in its "ought's," intending them for more general use than the immediate context in which they were spoken. Even when it seems to have consciously adopted "faith and facts" as the polarities between which Christian ethical decisions were to be made, the board seems to have operated by reference to some principles as the discussion of nuclear power will show. Hence the dilemma: how did the board understand its statements and function in relation to Sittler's speech that Christian ethics were not propositional and could not be stated in terms of principles?

Sittler's essay was followed by a chapter, "Christian Faith and Culture," written by William Lazareth, instructor in systematic theology at Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia. He tried to weave together both redemption and creation motifs for Christian social action. He asserted, as Sittler had done, that Christian ethical decision generated between the two poles of faith and the facts of life and that the Christian faith could not be stated propositionally.

Lazareth appears to be doing two things in this chapter. First, he is involved in the constructive task of describing the Christian's relationship to community life. Second, he is involved in answering some of the criticisms which have been made against Luther and Lutherans during the past century.

As he developed his first task, Lazareth used such categories as law and gospel, created orders, and vocation. Thus in this effort, while using ideas such as the two poles, he seems to have shifted somewhat from

Sittler's position to one which used more traditional Reformation categories.

God loves, Lazareth began, and his divine love was intended to govern human relationships "as certainly as gravity governed physical relationships." Love does not reign with the same constancy as gravity, however, because of man's rebellious separation from God and his neighbor, he said. Nevertheless, God works "with the strong left arm of the law" and "the gentle right arm of the gospel" to effect his will among men, Lazareth wrote. Through the gospel, God changes the "faith-relationship" to him as well as the "love-relationship with one another." Through the law, God does two things. First, he accuses man of being sinful. Second, he exercises his civic rule "for the protection and preservation of life." This civic law, power, or rule is one of the orders of creation and has "its origins in God's will, represents his rule, and manifests his love in an indirect, hidden way."¹

God created man in such a way as to force him into a number of communal relationships. These turned man from his natural self-centeredness to interdependence toward his neighbors, Lazareth said.

To some are granted the gifts of masculinity, to other, [sic] femininity; by the very complementary nature of personal and sexual companionship, God drives men and women together into the divinely created community of marriage and the family. To some are entrusted manual gifts and physical strength, to others mental gifts and organizational ability; by the very diversity of their endowments, men who would enjoy fuller, more productive lives are fitted together into the divinely ordained patterns of economic community. To some are bestowed the gifts of directing and administering, to others the capacities for applying and implementing; by the practical necessity for organizing and cooperating in tasks and

¹William Lazareth, "Christian Faith and Culture" in Christian Social Responsibility III: Life in Community, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 Vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 40-54.

projects for the common welfare, men are compelled to band together into some God-willed form of political government.¹

In these relationships, man can govern his conduct fairly and justly by natural reason, common sense, and a free will, with which God has endowed man, Lazareth said, adding that so long as man does not think such actions merit his salvation, he is living civilly according to God's will.

The power of God's love breaks in upon society via the Christian man in two special ways, Lazareth argued. This occurs first in what Lazareth called the Christian man's priestly service to his neighbor. The Christian man is no longer under the law but is "free to fulfill God's loving will for him. What God wants, he wants." For the Christian, faith "radically transforms his civil occupation and social obligations into religious vocations: God-given opportunities for service to the neighbor." In seeking to meet his neighbor's continually changing needs, the Christian "constantly receives specific guidance as to how his faith-activated love is to take on concrete form. He reverently worships God with rolled up sleeves by cheerfully serving his fellow men as a faithful steward of the gospel . . .", Lazareth asserted.²

Speaking of Christian vocation, Lazareth continued:

Every Christian then can worship God at the "altar" of his plow or lathe, her desk or oven. The faithful take on their God-given, everyday responsibilities not at the cost, but as the cost, of conforming to the servant-form of their Lord (Mark 10:45). This is what it means for a Christian to have a vocation. He performs the selfsame work as his fellows in the best way of which he is capable. Yet the integrity of his work reflects a completely new religious orientation: "the Christian difference." His goal is no longer doing the least work for the most money; it is rather working together with God as he continually re-creates and redeems men-in-community into his kingdom. His motivation is no longer simply

¹Lazareth, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 57.

²Ibid., p. 62.

profit or prestige; it is rather his joyful gratitude expressed in serving God through meeting his children's needs. His power is no longer in good contacts, smooth talk, and blind conformity to the selfish dictates of a social pressure group; it is rather his dynamic certainty in God's forgiveness of sins and the regeneration of the sinner.¹

What concrete form faith will take toward a Christian's neighbor is not known in advance. In fact, love sometimes moves in opposite directions. Hence legalism and the making of faith into theological propositions are not proper to faith, he said. Whatever the service to a neighbor might be, however--be it individual service or community restructuring--it would be "above and beyond the minimum daily demands of social justice and rational morality," Lazareth contended.²

The second manner in which God's love breaks in upon society via the Christian man is through a prophetic judgment which he gives Christians. This judgment results in righteous indignation toward social wrongs and a compulsion for justice, Lazareth argued. Such would be the case whenever a Christian saw a child of God "suffering social injustice or being otherwise mistreated," he said. The Christian would see "a brother for whom Christ also died behind every impersonal statistic in the F. B. I. summaries, the criminal and divorce court records, and the Kinsey reports," Lazareth continued. This would also be true in the case of political corruption, economic inequalities, overcrowded schools, juvenile delinquency, racial bigotry, cultural degradation, urban slums, rural wastelands, threats to civil liberties, and challenges to international responsibility, he argued. "In such situations, the faithful are compelled from within to 'step forth' and to do all in their God-

¹Lazareth, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 63.

²Ibid., pp. 66-67. See also p. 59.

given power to 'let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everlasting stream,'" Lazareth contended.¹

To be sure, sin corrupted all social structures, Lazareth said, so that all human effort had to be judged and redeemed. Consequently nothing could be completely Christianized, he said. Yet man must constantly work for some proximate solution which is better than others. Remedial work was not enough. Social change was required, he said.

Lazareth summarized his position as follows:

First, that there is no sphere of life which is a law unto itself, autonomous of the absolute sovereignty of God, however free it must remain from ecclesiastical domination. Secondly, that all men, even apart from Christ, are capable of a high degree of social justice in the building of a peaceful and humane society in which the Christian offers his critical co-operation and responsible participation. Thirdly, that it is primarily in and through the personal and corporate witness of his faithful followers in their civic vocations, as well as their church worship, that Christ's lordship--however hidden in its servant form--is made manifest in our communal life in contemporary society.²

In the process of stating the constructive task, Lazareth also sought to correct misunderstandings. In discussing law and gospel, Lazareth argued that the two could be distinguished but not separated as he said some Lutherans had done. By doing so, such persons separated "the communities of everyday life from the transforming power of the Christian faith," and capitulated to secularism. This seemed to be Lazareth's way of admitting the presence of quietism among Lutherans earlier in this century. He then said that two world wars and an economic depression had been needed to rescue Lutherans from this posi-

¹Lazareth, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 70.

²Ibid., p. 74.

tion, thus admitting social rather than theological forces as primary in reversing the Lutheran stance.¹

Lazareth also talked about divinely created orders and the rule of God through government. Yet while granting divine authority and origin to these instruments, Lazareth did not wish to identify them with the status quo nor did he wish to ground the sacredness of governmental authority in the form of government itself. Instead he insisted that such authority constantly needed to be and was renewed insofar as the agencies were obedient to God's will. Moreover, he said that citizens living under any form of rule had the right to disobey if the government ceased to exhibit its God-given functions. Lazareth emphasized the primary function of government as order, yet he called for the establishment of justice so that order and justice did not become an "either or." He called for the expression of love and spoke very optimistically about the role of the redeemed Christian in society. At the same time he said love was so pure it had to express itself in the less pure form of justice, warned against utopianism, and spoke of the presence of sin and unfulfillment in all that man does. He called for restructuring of society along with remedial work, but at the same time did not want to equate any of man's efforts with the kingdom of God. In short, it appears as though Lazareth wanted to protect his position in advance from many of the traditional attacks which have been levelled against Lutherans.²

In the process, however, he sometimes lost clarity. For example,

¹Lazareth, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 44.

²Ibid., pp. 53-56, 59, 66, 62-63, 68, 70-73, 45, and 68. Lazareth also rejected the criticisms of Ernst Troeltsch and Reinhold Niebuhr. See ibid., pp. 45 and 68.

he wrote:

God rules religious man primarily, as we have seen, by the gentle right arm of his gospel through Christ, faith, and the church. Simultaneously, however, he rules that same man civilly by the strong left arm of his law through Caesar, force and the state.¹

In these sentences, "primarily" and "civilly" are made to be parallel. Lazareth apparently did not want to subordinate civil rule to a secondary place lest that rule be considered less important and the way opened to less social responsibility. At the same time, he appeared hesitant to contrast "religiously" and "civilly" lest he open the door to the spiritual-worldly dychotomy that often plagued sections of American Lutheranism. Thus the language is unclear although the reason for such unclarity might be inferred.

After Sittler had spoken about the structure of Christian ethics, patterned after the posture of Christ, and Lazareth had described in broad terms man's relationship to culture, the writers devoted four chapters to four specific areas within that culture, namely, economics, politics, marriage, and the church.

The Rev. Rufus Cornelsen turned his attention to the economic sphere. He characterized economic life as one of the divine orders of creation. Though established "to provide the means of life" and to "realize . . . human destiny," economic life was marred by sin and needed redemptive love.² Thus Cornelsen, like Lazareth, sought to operate from both creation and redemption themes.

Cornelsen said that the present American economy had interest in

¹Lazareth, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 53.

²Rufus Cornelsen, "Christian Faith and Economic Life" in Christian Social Responsibility III: Life in Community, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 76-79.

neither the consumer nor the producer needs of man. It was in fact, he said, "a system . . . impelled by no concern whatever for human welfare."¹

Both the owner and the laborer were estranged from each other, from production, and the thing produced, he said. In such a state of disorientation, the idea of vocation "will have but little significance,"

Cornelsen observed. He nevertheless proceeded to describe what Christian vocation was. But by his own admission he raised the question of the value of talking in such terms to men in a contemporary situation. He continued:

Vocation means that God creates every man to be an individual, a uniquely gifted and self-determining being. He places him in community, in a mutually dependent, free and personal relationship with his neighbors. He also gives him a "place"; that is, something at his disposal, such as a piece of ground, a sphere of influence, a period of time. It also denotes that all this is informed by the divine will and that man is made responsible. For the Christian vocation further means that it is all comprehended in God's redemptive act in Christ and in man's call to manifest God's love in deeds of service to his neighbor. We have seen how our modern economy performs a stark denial of precisely this understanding of human life: It demands that man and nature be liberated from the restraint implicit in the quality of "givenness" and transcendent meaning; it refuses him a "place" in the economic process as it leaves nothing at his disposal by isolating him from property and a responsible relationship to production; it frustrates the need for individual self-realization and fulfillment in community by denying personal mutuality and compelling mechanical conformity in economic performance. Industrial society has thoroughly secularized economic life. The sacral power has been removed from it. Man has ceased to experience work as a "mask" of either a judging or a loving God.²

Despite this criticism of the present economic order, Cornelsen did not wish to reject it. On the contrary, he asserted that precisely in this economic situation, God called men to be of service. While saying that he did not presume to outline a program to meet current needs, Cornelsen

¹Cornelsen, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 87.

²Ibid., pp. 91-93 and 97.

did specify what he termed primary relations which he said "must be recognized and structured in our economic institutions if the current depersonalizing effects in modern industry are to be substantially minimized if not overcome."¹ The image of norms or principles is thus called forth.

Among the meaningful relationships needing attention, Cornelsen said, was the relationship of man to work. This relationship should be both personal and responsible. Nature and industrial tools should be seen once again as "masks" of God so that a meaningful relationship could be restored between the person, the world, and things. All men had a right to share in the "power relationship to the production and distribution of economic goods and services," Cornelsen said. He further contended that the Christian faith required that "the creative uniqueness of the individual be not suppressed but given incentive for full actualization, and that the work process relate man to his neighbor in such a way that free and wholesome groups are fostered and the personal life is enriched and deepened in fellowship."²

Cornelsen therefore called for a restructuring of the present economic system and hailed the potential roles of both labor unions and the state in the restructuring process. Unions were seen as instruments to permit laboring men to share in the power relationship of production and distribution. The state was seen as an instrument for stabilizing the economy and maintaining a wide distribution of economic power.³

¹Cornelsen, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 104.

²Ibid., pp. 105-106.

³Ibid., pp. 107-110.

In a fourth essay, Dr. T. A. Kantonen, professor of systematic theology at Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, Ohio, wrote about the relationship of the Christian faith to the political order. Kantonen also stated his agreement with Sittler that ethical decisions generated between the poles of faith and the facts of life and emerged from the God-relationship in response to changing situations. Hence ethics could not be "regulated by any preconceived static principles or codes," Kantonen said, labeling as futile attempts to prescribe man's action "in every conceivable case." Instead, he said, the Christian imperative constantly reminded the believer who he was, what resources were available to him, and what responsibilities were his as a Christian. The church had a great deal to say, Kantonen continued, about both injustices of political systems and romantic notions concerning the human situation. The Christian faith possessed a realistic appraisal of man's sin together with an understanding of the image of God and the renewal in Christ through the forgiveness of sin. This understanding made Christians aware of the potential both for good and evil of every man and made possible the only valid optimism about the human predicament, namely, the optimism of redemption, he said.¹

Political order rested upon a governing and ordering power derived from God, Kantonen asserted. As Lazareth had also suggested, Kantonen insisted that the historical form which the order took was not to be identified with the ultimate divine will of God. Nevertheless, in the political order, God as creator was involved in an ongoing process

¹T. A. Kantonen, "Christian Faith and the Political Order" in Christian Social Responsibility III: Life in Community, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 114-116.

of structuring and ordering to achieve his purpose, Kantonen wrote. Thus, although sinful man misused power in all its historical forms, Kantonen argued, ordered community existence made possible by political power was "a manifestation of God's fatherly will."¹

Kantonen contended that Luther's idea that the power of the political order was traceable back to the creator rather than to "human agreement" fit what he termed the evidence of history that "human society from its earliest beginnings has shown some measure of order."²

The most important question to be asked of the state, Kantonen continued, was not what the citizen had a right to expect from his government but rather what God expected of the state. The basic function which faith ascribed to the state, Kantonen said, was the establishment and preservation of order. Jesus, Paul, and Luther were cited as authority for such a judgment. Such a function presupposed the right of the state to bear the sword, Kantonen said, for to deprive the state of the right to use the sword, both with respect to the discipline of its own subjects and the defense of its own borders, was to deny the state the right to exist. "No matter how intolerably immoral the situation may be," Kantonen wrote, "the fact remains that in the present sin-cursed world a weak political order is a doomed political order."³

Order did not exist for its own sake, Kantonen continued, but for the sake of obtaining such justifiable goals as articulated in the preamble to the constitution of the United States. These goals included

¹Kantonen, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 116.

²Ibid., p. 117.

³Ibid., pp. 127-129.

insuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, establishing justice, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty. To hold that the state existed for such purposes, he said, was to define the state in terms of a community of law. He cited the address of Bishop Berggrav of Norway to the 1952 Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation to the effect that a lawless government was "self-contradictory."¹

Summarizing what he thought God expected from the state with respect to law, justice, and love, Kantonen wrote as follows:

The whole content of the law is summed up in the commandment of love. This is no sentimentality but has a concrete application to social relations: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," It means: take care of the gift of life, your neighbor's as well as your own. Human life must not be surrendered to exploitation and brutality. Life in society must be made secure even for the weak. Justice, detached from love, is empty; love, detached from justice, is flabby. Love does not rule out punitive justice, for love may have to use severe methods, but even then the aim is redemptive. The basis of justice is not human dignity or worth but unconditioned love. When care of neighbor is conditioned by his worth, those who are considered unworthy come to be despised.²

Kantonen attacked the idea that the church was to remain aloof from politics. He called upon Luther's doctrine of the two realms, representing God's twofold activity, as the structure within which the church operated to fulfill its mission in the political arena.

Arguing that the state could not subjugate the church to it, nor vice versa, without doing violence to the true function of each, Kantonen also urged Christians to disobey a state which overstepped its bounds as well as to avoid theocratic pretensions. At the same time, he said, Christians had three practical and positive responsibilities to the

¹Kantonen, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 130-131.

²Ibid., p. 133.

state.¹

The first of these practical obligations was for the church to sharpen the conscience of the state. The state as a servant of God had a conscience, Kantonen said, but it required instruction. Second, it was the duty of spokesmen for the church to champion human rights. And finally, it was the duty of the church to express its faith in effective works of resourceful love. Hence concern for such areas as slum clearance, feeding the hungry, settling refugees, protecting children, providing for the sick and aged, conserving health, and promoting peace were legitimate functions of the church. To do this, Christians had to be sensitive to the prompting of love and justice, while simultaneously wise as serpents when active in the decision making processes of a democracy, he said.²

Kantonen, like Sittler and Lazareth, summoned the church to social responsibility in a way that would challenge the older quietism. But by using the structures of the created orders and realms and by giving greater emphasis in his schema to the doctrine of creation than redemption, Kantonen again seemed to be standing on somewhat different ground from that which Sittler had described as proper for Christian ethics. Like Lazareth, Kantonen asserted the primacy of order to that of justice although he did not ignore justice. Similarly, he protested certain tendencies which had appeared in Lutheranism, such as dividing the two realms so far as to give the state "full autonomy in worldly affairs." His concerns were not only historical, however. He also

¹Kantonen, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 142.

²Ibid., pp. 143-145.

warned against what he termed the "demonization" of democracy and free enterprise in America by pushing a passion for freedom so far that it became "freedom from God."¹

In the two remaining essays, Harold Haas, executive secretary of the Board of Social Missions, discussed faith in relation to family living, and Harold Letts, social action director, discussed the church as community and mission.

The interest in marriage reflected a continuity of concern for family living long present in American Lutheranism and a continuity of concern for private as well as public morality. Haas, like Kantonen, started with the doctrine of creation. He began by asserting the traditional idea that marriage was one of God's created orders rather than the result of some other kind of arrangement or social agreement. Despite that assertion, however, Haas said that marriage or the home was culturally conditioned. It was no longer the center of man's life, since most of man's needs were now fulfilled outside the home whereas once they had focused in the home. The facts of industrialization and urbanization had also provided a social status and economic security for women apart from marriage, Haas noted, which in turn had resulted in certain ambiguities in the present culture about the relationship between men and women.²

Because the family at one time served many functions, social as well as economic, there had existed what Haas called external buttresses

¹Kantonen, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 136-142 and 126-127.

²Harold Haas, "Christian Faith and Family Life" in Christian Social Responsibility III: Life in Community, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 vols.: Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 148-153.

to give the home stability. These functions had now largely been transferred to other social units as the result of which marriage had come "to depend in an almost unprecedented way upon the quality of a personal relationship," he said. If, therefore, the personal relationship was threatened, few external things existed from which a marriage could derive stability, he wrote. As a result the percentage of divorces had increased.¹

Haas discussed sex in light of biblical talk about "knowing" a person and "one flesh." He said sexual union was revelatory of one another's person and therefore an act which established "a basic union between a man and a woman." Through the revelation, communication, and total commitment which were involved in the sex act, Haas wrote, a man and a woman became one flesh. Unless one understood sex in this radical way, Haas continued, "it becomes increasingly difficult in the light of improved means of contraception to state why the sexual union should not be an experience shared with more than one partner, either premarital or postmarital."² Only within the one flesh relationship of total commitment of a man and a woman to each other, Haas wrote, can sex "realize its purpose of establishing a unique divinely created communion between a man and a woman. Because a totality of self-giving is involved here, this is an experience which cannot be shared in depth with more than one partner without a violation of the divine purposes for sex." Conceding that polygamy might be tolerated as an expediency under some circumstances, Haas argued that from a Christian view, only monogamy

¹Haas, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 155 and 158.

²Ibid., pp. 164-165.

constituted the "one flesh" relationship.¹

Haas now proceeded to an idea which had been an important part of the ULCA statement on marriage adopted in 1956.² He asserted the primary requisite of fidelity rather than love to maintain the marriage bond. While admitting an indebtedness to Emil Brunner at this point, Haas was nevertheless asserting a new idea for American Lutherans.

Marriage, as interpreted by faith, is the total commitment of one man and one woman to each other in a unique divinely ordered relationship comprising mutual consent, love, sexual union, and fidelity, causing a bi-unity to be established and pointing toward its own extension in the family. While it is an inclusive commitment that constitutes marriage rather than any specific element as consent, love, sexual union, or fidelity, it is fidelity that sustains the commitment. It is a profound misunderstanding to think that marriage is based on the emotion of love. It is fidelity alone that is able to sustain the kind of commitment that makes marriage possible.³

Having discussed the basis for marriage, Haas talked about divorce. Lutherans had customarily been reluctant to consent to divorce. Haas now wrote, however, that inasmuch as Christian ethics moved between faith and the facts of life, one had to consider the facts before ruling out the possibility of divorce. Marriage as a structure of creation, as one flesh, and as a divine calling was indissoluble, Haas maintained, in the sense that it was intended to be lifelong and it created "fundamental changes of being in man and woman that cannot be eradicated."⁴ Nevertheless, in some instances, Haas counseled, the facts might suggest that the only possible action be separation or even divorce.

Remarriage of divorced persons had also been a disputed practice

¹Haas, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 166 and 170.

²See infra, p. 444.

³Haas, in Christian Social Responsibility III, p. 171.

⁴Ibid., pp. 173-174.

among Lutherans. Haas now argued that remarriage was permissible provided there was repentance for the first failure.¹

Haas proceeded to defend the responsible use of contraception within the marriage and the legitimacy for mothers to work outside the home. Factors such as health, vocation, and economic circumstances might legitimately affect a family's decision to limit or space the number of children, he said. "Christian ethical decision is made as the God-relationship is allowed to be determinative from within the facts of a given situation," he wrote. Asserting that women "ordinarily" find a "primary kind of fulfillment . . . in marriage and family," Haas nevertheless said that "certain facts of the modern situation must be taken into consideration . . ." before deciding whether a mother should assume a job outside the home.²

Haas' work thus reflects the method of using faith and the facts of life as poles between which ethical decisions are to be made. Facts influenced his views concerning the nature of marriage, sex, divorce, responsible parenthood, and working mothers. Thus he charted new ground for the ULCA.³

The final essay about the church as community and mission was written by Harold Letts. He asserted that Christian life was communal in nature.⁴ This judgment should be understood in contrast to the charge

¹Haas, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 177-180.

²Ibid., pp. 181-183.

³It should be noted that Haas published a volume in 1960 in which he expressed essentially the same views on marriage as he did in the essay surveyed above. See Harold Haas, Marriage (Philadelphia, 1960).

⁴Harold C. Letts, "The Church as Community and Mission" in Christian Social Responsibility III: Life in Community, ed. Harold C. Letts (3 Vols.: Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 186-187.

of irresponsible individualism, against which American Lutherans were attempting to defend themselves. His remarks are thus a further sign of a broadening sense of social responsibility within American Lutheranism. This communal nature characterized the Christian's sacramental life, his worship, and his nurture. Even evangelism found a new dimension by corporate action, he said. The church as community had a mission to the whole of society, Letts maintained, not just to church members. To fulfill that role, the church's mission involved four functions.

The first of these Letts called public testimony. Such testimony should be addressed to everyone, and, to avoid confusion, should be based on God's Word, Letts said. "The Word of God must be addressed to men in terms of their actual situations," Letts wrote. "It must shed light on human relations, instructing the community and its rulers about the nature and function of the state." To do this, the church could use her pulpits, books, magazines, and schools, and should make specific, official, corporate testimony, he asserted. The execution of this function stood in the tradition of Luther in addressing the German nobility, Letts said.¹

The second of these functions was what Letts termed a witness to public officials and community leaders. Such action included dissemination of technical information and judgments concerning political and controversial matters. This called for wisdom, not silence, Letts wrote, and pointed to the action of the Norwegian bishops and the church leaders of the German East Zone as examples. Such speech involved the proclamation of the law to leaders of the state, both in their institu-

¹Letts, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 204-207.

tional and individual roles, he said. In proclaiming the law, the church "must . . . seek to point out in every situation new possibilities of justice and freedom while supporting efforts to maintain social peace and order," he said. In stating both the first and second functions, Letts left flexible lines for the church to follow. The implication was that it was legitimate for the church to speak to the state both in general moral and specifically technical terms. This could be done by issuing general statements as well as by private conversation with specific governmental leaders, he suggested. Such a course of action was surely a far cry from the quietism of old.¹

The third function of the church, Letts said, was to counsel the laity to assume responsible roles in society. He saw a "temptation for the laity . . . to forget that . . . he [God] rules in public life as well as church life." Letts suggested that the church counteract this tendency by bringing together groups of laymen to discuss both the technical information concerning problems and the ethical dimensions which might bear on the questions involved.

And finally, Letts wrote, the church was responsible to keep open lines of communication for a continued free flow of data and expressions of conviction concerning social issues. Letts said a case in point was the desegregation of the public schools. If the churches had acted to keep open lines of conversation through which developing opinion as well as data could have been made public, they could have served a social function in the current racial crisis, he said.²

¹Letts, in Christian Social Responsibility III, pp. 207-209.

²Ibid., pp. 209-213.

According to those four criteria, the ULCA was acting responsibly toward society as the subsequent history will show. It was these guidelines which apparently charted the path for Letts while he was social action secretary.

The Christian Social Responsibility series, while not providing "a definitive book" of which the 1948 ULCA convention resolution had spoken, did influence the approach of the ULCA to some social issues as the subsequent data will also show. Some 3,000 copies of each volume in the series were sold. Twenty-eight study conferences involving 1,200 clergymen and 200 laymen were held throughout the ULCA, thus providing the potential for a gradually developing impact on the church. More immediately, the publication influenced the thinking of leaders of the social missions board and provided some impact on the theological seminaries through the participation of some professors in the discussions.¹

It was not only the Board of Social Missions, however, which was engaged in an attempt to restate a Lutheran ethic. Private efforts were made as well.

The first contribution was made in 1948 by Dr. T. A. Kantonen. In his book, Resurgence of the Gospel, Kantonen said that ". . . it is time for theologians everywhere to recognize that Karl Holl, not Ernst Troeltsch, is the correct interpreter of Luther's ethics and to rediscover with Holl the tremendous moral power in the reformer's proclamation of sin and grace." Kantonen tried to demonstrate that sin penetrates every human act and motive, so that, according to Luther, everyone and

¹Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962. See also ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 786-787.

every act required the forgiveness of sin. Having been forgiven, man becomes sensitive to his neighbor's need and dedicates himself in spontaneous service of love to man and God without reference to the worth or worthlessness of the loved. The "right relation to God results in the right relation to fellow-man," Kantonen wrote.¹ Thus faith and service were intrinsically related.

Kantonen also stressed two other themes often treated by Lutherans. First he spoke of the impact of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in relation to the created orders and vocation. Kantonen understood that doctrine to mean that a Christian in his vocation in these orders worked at God's command in service to his neighbor.² Second, he emphasized the need for order in the political realm.³

Implicit in most of the private efforts was the inference that these attempts represented Luther's point of view. One man, however, Dr. George Forell, who at the time of his writing was on the staff of Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, explicitly claimed that his task was to describe correctly Luther's ethic.⁴ This ethic was stated in terms of four principles, Forell said, namely the methodological principle, the ethical principle, the practical principle, and the limiting principle. If it was important for the Board of Social Missions to say as Sittler wrote in 1957 that the term principle was

¹T. A. Kantonen, Resurgence of the Gospel (Philadelphia, 1948), p. 82.

²Ibid., pp. 166-169.

³Ibid., pp. 179-188.

⁴Faith Active in Love (New York, 1954), p. 13.

inappropriately used of the Christian faith and ethic, then the use of this term plus the conscious effort to relate to Luther, must set Forell's work apart from that of Sittler.

Before attempting to set the record straight concerning the correct understanding of Luther, Forell sought to clear Luther of some charges. As examples of the latter, Forell denied both that Luther had contributed to the rise of capitalism or of nationalism. He also attacked the charge that Luther had no coherent social ethic but only an occasional series of explosions on social issues. The chief reason for the confusion in the understanding of Luther's ethic, Forell said, lay in the desire of German professors, like Ernst Troeltsch, who required the erection of a neat system. Each used the part of Luther which fit the professor's system and disregarded the rest of Luther's theology, Forell said.¹

After speaking to the critics, Forell undertook his constructive task. He began by describing Luther's theological method. This was simply to describe the relationship of man to God and to God's creation as it existed. Luther's statement that a Christian man is a free lord of all and at the same time a slave subject to all simply described the actual relationship between God and Christian man. Such a man actually was simultaneously sinful and righteous in the sight of God, as Luther saw it, Forell maintained.²

¹Faith Active in Love, pp. 11-43, 44-48, and 50-53.

²Ibid., pp. 44-69. Forell did not complete his work without some lack of clarity. On the one hand he wrote: "As far as Luther is concerned, all ethics is based upon God's forgiveness of sin." On the other hand, Forell said that all men, including non-Christians, met God in the structures of the world--economic, political, family--and therefore were ethically responsible to God within those structures. How forgiveness was related to the structures, especially for the non-

Luther also had an ethical principle, Forell explained. This principle was divine love which granted forgiveness and which was to be apprehended in faith toward God and love toward one's neighbor. It was a faith which rested on God's free mercy and a love which operated without reference to merit or happiness as dividends. The faith and love were interdependent; if faith were present, it created love as a spontaneous, continuing, self-giving act of service to one's neighbor, regardless of the neighbor's worth or reaction.¹

The practical principle for Luther, according to Forell, was the natural orders of the family, the state, the empirical church, and one's calling. God used these orders to make men serve each other. Like Lazareth and Kantonen, Forell said the orders were not autonomous but instruments of the divine will. The orders received their immediate standards on the one hand from natural and positive law and on the other hand from reason.² Since reason was limited, the particular forms which it constructed for the natural orders were therefore also subject to mutability and change. While Forell said that Luther was conservative in his attitude toward change, he nevertheless allowed for change and development in society through the medium of heroes or miracle men who

believer, was not shown, despite the assertion that "all" of Luther's ethics derived from forgiveness.

¹Faith Active in Love, pp. 70-111.

²Ibid., pp. 114-133. Forell quoted Luther to the effect that the Decalog was the most competent and orderly expression of the natural law, but implied that Luther did not equate the two. Positive law comprised the various specific laws under which men lived. Such laws could be altered by means of reason. Hence they were not static nor given in the sense the particular forms in which the orders existed could not be changed. In this manner, Forell attempted to extricate Luther from any charges that his ethic required obedience to every form of the status quo.

would arise to effect the change.¹ The orders were infected by sin not only because men were sinful but also because the standards reflected the consequences of the fall. Nature and reason were fallen nature and fallen reason. Yet, the orders could be used as a restraint against sin and chaos, especially against anarchy, though such orders had no saving power.²

Related to the doctrine of the created orders was the doctrine of the two realms. God ruled through both realms by different means, as other writers had pointed out. The point of contact between the two realms was the individual man of faith. In the individual,

the spiritual realm penetrates the secular, without, however, abolishing it. The Gospel itself cannot be used to rule the world. . . . But through the person of the believer, who is related to Christ through the Gospel and who is at the same time a member of the natural orders, the faith active in love penetrates the social order.

Through the individual, ". . . the ethical principle of Luther's ethic penetrates the practical principle, and the insights of the Christian faith become relevant to society."³

Forell called the fourth principle the limiting principle. This referred to Luther's eschatology. Forell argued that Luther believed the final judgment was imminent and therefore disparaged efforts at a complete social reform. Such reform as might be undertaken was encouraged only as patchwork, Forell maintained.⁴ Faith, which "was the source of Luther's social ethics . . . also . . . made it impossible for

¹Forell, Faith Active in Love, pp. 134-139.

²Ibid., pp. 139-147.

³Ibid., pp. 148-149 and 154.

⁴Ibid., pp. 156-177.

Luther to take any social reform ultimately seriously," Forell said.

Faith was the "motive" and the "quietive" of his social ethics. It was the driving force behind all his attempts to reorganize society and at the same time the reason why all such attempts were in the background of his theological thinking.

.....
The Christian, according to Luther, will not expect that the problems that ultimately concern him can be solved by means of a reorganization of the social order. This adds a definitely quietistic element to Luther's thinking. The social ethics of Luther has a detached air which prevents him from lightly overestimating the possible accomplishments of social reforms and tends to let him expect the solution of the real problems of the world through the intervention of God rather than the efforts of man.¹

Two other ULCA leaders also made efforts to work their way through some contemporary issues and to bring their insights to bear on the problems. The men, Dr. G. Elson Ruff, editor of the Lutheran, and Dr. Donald Heiges, Dean of Chicago Lutheran Seminary, delivered two series of Knubel-Miller Foundation lectures which were subsequently published.

Dr. Ruff entitled his volume, The Dilemma of Church and State. He attempted to give a brief historical survey of the issue as well as to touch on contemporary questions. A part of his book dealt specifically with Luther and Lutheranism. Dr. Ruff appears to have been less concerned to protect Luther from his critics than most American Lutheran writers in this period. Ruff could say in a non-defensive way that the problems of Germany in Nazi times had Lutheran origins. Referring to the

¹Faith Active in Love, pp. 162 and 167. Forell also prepared three essays as a part of the Martin Luther Lecture Series given at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. These essays were published in 1960 and attempt to describe Luther's view toward politics in terms of the created orders, the two kingdoms, and law and gospel, along substantially the same lines as those of his earlier work referred to above. See George W. Forell, Harold J. Grimm, and Theodore Hoelty-Nickel, Luther and Culture ("Martin Luther Lectures" [Luther College Press, 1960]), pp. 3-69. Forell also published a volume in 1955 as an introduction to ethics, but it was not intended to be a statement of Lutheran ethics. See George W. Forell, Ethics of Decision (Philadelphia, 1955).

Germans, Ruff said:

They had been trained in Romans 13 according to the old interpretation. The state is of God. It must not be denied. Their attitude had roots in the days of the Reformation. They owed their failures of 1933 and afterward to their understanding--or misunderstanding--of Martin Luther. The misfortune of Luther is that among his followers the man has been revered when much that he taught had been forgotten.¹

Ruff maintained that "no man could have been less well prepared than Luther to take responsibility for advising his fellow-countrymen on politics." He spoke of the exhortations in Luther's writings to obey the state and of the influence which these had had on the development of Lutheran quietism in Germany and in America. Ruff, however, stressed a note not often found in Lutheran reviews of Luther, namely, what Ruff termed Luther's call to "non-violent resistance 'when the prince is in the wrong.'" Citing Luther's On Secular Authority and Bishop Berggrav's wartime interpretation of Luther, Ruff asserted that "nobody has written a book on Luther to Gandhi, but the line runs clearer that way than From Luther to Hitler . . ."² Surveying the results of Lutheran subservience to the state in pre-World War II days and the effort led by the Norwegians to break that relationship under Nazi rule, Ruff drew the conclusion that "a bedrock principle of church and state is this: The church must not be captive to the state, or it becomes irrelevant to the people's need. It is to be the front line for all who suffer injustice. It must be the conscience of the state."³

In his work on the Christian's calling, Dr. Heiges reviewed what

¹C. Elson Ruff, The Dilemma of Church and State (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 44.

²Ibid., p. 52.

³Ibid., p. 60.

he called the Biblical view, Luther's view, and a contemporary view of vocation. He understood the Old and New Testaments to speak similarly of God's call to men "to repentance and faith," of God's call to men "to perform special functions," and of God's call to Christians "to a holy life in all their relationships." Heiges understood Luther's doctrine of the calling in relation to the two kingdoms. By virtue of this, he argued that Luther viewed calling, on the one hand, as the gospel's invitation "to life in Christ," and on the other hand, as the law's appeal to man for "obedience and service" in the world.¹

For a contemporary understanding of a Christian's calling, Heiges said that God was summoning his children "to be faithful members of his household" and to serve him with fidelity in the created orders. Inside the household, Christian man was called to live a life worthy of his calling, "to minister to the saints" and to declare "the wonderful deeds of God." Outside the household, Christian man was called "to glorify God," to make the best use of his talents, to ground his vocation in God's command, and to renew it by his grace. Besides being called to faithfulness and obedience, Christians were exhorted to rejoice in their work, to grow in the knowledge of themselves and the various fields of their vocations, and to pray.²

The implication of the book was that if a person properly understood God's call, he would not find his work a drudgery but would find it fulfilling. The difficulty with that implication is the inability

¹Donald R. Heiges, The Christian's Calling (Philadelphia, 1958, pp. 41, 45, and 63ff. Heiges admitted there were "weaknesses" in Luther's position. These included the fact that the Reformer lived in a feudal society, the assumption that men were already living in their life stations, and the understanding that the world would end shortly.

²Ibid., pp. 66-87.

to account for the man who understands God's call and still finds his work a drudgery. It would seem that the options in such a case would be to quit the job and try to find another or to find a new theology. Heiges saw the problem and described it movingly. But the solution proposed does not seem to be new nor to stretch as far as the problem sketched.¹

In studying the effort toward a restatement of ethical theory within the ULCA, one must look beyond the efforts of individuals and boards to the seminaries to see what was happening there. Reference has already been made to such seminary teachers as Heinecken, Tappert, Lazareth, Sittler, Kantonen, and Bachmann in the preparation of the series on Christian Social Responsibility. In addition, the contribution of O. F. Nolde toward international affairs has been noted.

It is difficult to measure what was happening at the seminaries. To judge from the seminary catalogs, however, there was less emphasis on social ethics in the ULCA than in Augustana. None of the seminaries during this period had a full-time professor of ethics, as did Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, although Dr. Bertha Paulsen at Gettysburg was a full-time professor of Christian sociology and psychology.²

On the basis of the catalogs, the seminaries at Gettysburg and Philadelphia reflect the greatest social concern. At Gettysburg, there

¹Heiges, The Christian's Calling, pp. 1-20. See Lenski's finding concerning the impact of the doctrine of calling on contemporary protestantism. Supra, p. 233.

²Dr. Harold Haas credits Dr. Paulsen for her influence on him when she taught at Wagner College. Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962. The Rev. Rufus Cornelsen said in an interview that theological students were not being adequately trained in terms of social action. He attributed this chiefly to inadequate faculty resources at ULCA seminaries. Interview with the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, January 17, 1962.

were ten courses listed in the fields of sociology and psychology during the 1950-51 academic year. Courses in "The Church in Contemporary Society," "Christian Ethics," and "Sociology of Religion" were all required and taught by Dr. Paulsen. Ten years later, two new courses had been added. Fewer courses were offered at Philadelphia than at Gettysburg. In the 1950-51 catalog, one course in ethics taught in the systematics department by Dr. Heinecken was required for graduation. In addition, Heinecken offered an elective in ethics, Dr. Nolde taught a course about Christian education and the community, and Dr. Tappert offered a course on "Social Attitudes of Lutherans in the Nineteenth Century." In 1960-61, two courses in ethics were required for graduation at Philadelphia. Nolde was also offering an additional course on international relations and Lazareth was offering two new courses, one concerning urban life and the other concerning the church and political life. The offerings at the other ULCA seminaries were not as large as those at Gettysburg and Philadelphia, although by 1960 it was quite common at all the seminaries to require two courses for graduation in ethics, sociology, or church and society.¹

One might therefore argue that ethics as a separate discipline had not yet been given adequate attention by the ULCA seminaries as a

¹See Bulletin, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg (1950-51), pp. 10-11; and (1960-61), pp. 11-12 and 48; The Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia (1950-51), pp. 34, 36, and 39; and (1960-61), pp. 20-21 and 26-28. See also The Record, Chicago Lutheran Seminary, LX, 1, p. 10; and LXV, 1, pp. 28, 34, and 38; Central Seminary Bulletin II, 1, pp. 11 and 15; and XII, 1, pp. 20 and 27; Bulletin, The Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, IX, February, 1960, pp. 19 and 21; Catalogue of Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary (1950), p. 4; and (1960-61), pp. 10-11, 22, 30, 31, and 34; Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Catalog (1950-51), pp. 23 and 29; and (1960-61), pp. 22 and 27-28; and The Wittenberg Bulletin (1950), p. 32; and (1960), pp. 23-27.

whole. This was the case in more acute form in the ELC and ALC. However, in addition to the formal courses offered, one must also recognize the presence of professors outside the field of ethics who had strong social concerns. This situation was especially noticeable at Philadelphia and Gettysburg, and to a less degree at Wittenberg, Chicago, and California, particularly in the disciplines of church history, systematics, homiletics, and Christian education.

Regardless of the limitations to which one might point, however, it is nevertheless clear that the ULCA had made a much more organized and elaborate effort at a restatement of ethical theory than had any of the other Lutheran churches under study. She did so both officially and privately. Each movement was designed to strengthen the fabric of social concern within the ULCA and to give it a stronger theological undergirding. The development of this theological undergirding was, in the judgment of Dr. Harold Haas, one of the most important thrusts of the social action movement within the ULCA during the post-World War II era.¹ The ULCA received its leadership in this task from the Board of Social Missions and from key individuals, chiefly seminary professors. The effort sought in part to regain past positions and in part sought to draft new ones. It helped to give the ULCA the most advanced position among American Lutherans being studied in the continuing development of a broader social responsibility. It remained unclear, however, whether a contextualism could fit into a scheme of created orders. It was also the case, as will be shown, that the ULCA did not always reject the idea of talking about Christian ethics as propositions or as principles, even

¹Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962.

though Sittler had said that to do so was to dismiss God. Thus the ULCA said one thing in its statement of ethical theory and sometimes functioned differently when it acted.

Issues of War and Peace

The picture of smoke and vapor over Hiroshima and Nagasaki seemed to hang like a heavy cloud over the moral conscience of many Americans following World War II. The question of the use of atomic power plagued countless people, including members of the ULCA. At the first meeting of the Board of Social Missions held after the 1945 atomic explosions, the question of the use of atomic energy was placed on the agenda for discussion by board members. The consensus seemed to be that any use of such power in the support of imperialism, colonialism, and the shifting balance of power, or indeed any use which resulted in what was termed burdensome taxation, was to be rejected because such use would likely lead to a third world war. On the contrary, use of such power under international control and cooperation for what was termed world security, alleviating human burden and suffering, and releasing the resources of the earth for the improvement of living conditions was hailed as proper. The board, however, seemed puzzled, and being puzzled, the group tried to deal with the matter by reference to God's providence and a touch of utopianism.

But in reality we need not fear, if we put our trust in God and His illimitable power. We are witnesses of His power and grace to make effective ways and means of justice, righteousness and peace in a world of sin. We therefore urge upon our people and nation penitence and the repudiation under international agreements of the false principles of balance of power, the race for large armaments, and the suppression of minority peoples; and, on the other hand, we appeal for the support of the agencies of relief and rehabilitation which are seeking to alleviate suffering, disease, and demoraliza-

tion in areas devastated by war, famine, and pestilence.¹

Many facets of the issues of war and peace continued to claim a great deal of attention from delegates and board members at ULCA meetings during the fifteen-year period following World War II. In reporting to the 1946 ULCA convention, the social missions board made a plea for world order which was adopted by the delegates. The resolution called for support of the United Nations, especially in its efforts to establish international law, reduce and regulate the use of armaments, promote human rights, expedite self-government for colonial countries, and develop economic cooperation. The same convention also asked the federal government to release conscientious objectors in the same ratio as men released from military service and agreed that the ULCA would appropriate more than \$16,000 from the unallocated portion of budget receipts to pay agencies which had taken care of ULCA conscientious objectors.²

Two years later, the matter of growing tension between the United States and the Soviet Union was scrutinized by the social missions board. They reported to the convention that though there was a sharp difference between the two countries, those differences need not result in war. "A third world war, even if waged to prevent the spread of communism, would almost certainly result in the loss of our democratic freedom, and in the disruption and anarchy on which communism grows," the report said. Therefore caution was expressed lest what was termed the intemperate voices and hysteria of the people threaten the peace. Saying that war

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, December 13, 1945, p. 17.

²ULCA, Minutes (1946), pp. 460-461 and 467-468.

was the antithesis of the spirit of the gospel, the report reminded the church of its duty toward peace and justice. It challenged the idea of an "inevitable" war or a "preventive war" against Russia. Members and groups within the ULCA were urged by convention vote to study two statements issued by the Federal Council of Churches, namely "A Positive Program for Peace" and "Soviet-American Relations," together with the statement on world peace submitted to the convention by the social missions board. In addition, ULCA members were urged to support the European Recovery Program and the principle of tariff revision embodied in the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. Finally, the social missions board reported they had notified Congress of their opposition to Universal military training. This had been done on the ground that such an act did not contribute to what was termed real defense of the country, that the money might better be spent for other means of defense, and that such a program would tend to militarize the American society, the board said.¹

During 1949, a school on world order was sponsored by the social missions board attended officially by sixty-two persons from thirteen synods. Topics discussed included "Soviet-American Relations," "The United Nations," "The European Recovery Program," and "The Church's Program for Peace." The board also cooperated in the sponsorship of eight inter-denominational workshops on American Foreign Policy following the second study conference on "The Churches and World Order."²

That same year, the Board of Social Missions in joint action with

¹ULCA, Minutes (1948), pp. 367-368, 374, and 384.

²Ibid. (1950), pp. 620-621. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 10, 1949, p. 23.

the ULCA Executive Board adopted a statement entitled "The United Lutheran Church in America Speaks on World Order." Saying that the church did not intend to dictate to Christians, the authors of the statement nevertheless presented "certain principles to impress Christians with their heavy responsibility for world order." All of these rested upon the "Word of God" as the "source of our convictions" and upon Christ as "Leader and Guide," the statement said. First of the principles¹ to be enunciated was the assertion that God as loving father was sovereign over all men and nations so that no nation stood outside his law nor could rightfully demand man's highest allegiance. Moreover, Christians were "moved by the compulsion of love for our fellow men" to seek peace. War, the statement continued, was evil.

War inevitably tends to corrupt both victor and vanquished. In its destruction of life and property and in its still more serious damage to morals and spiritual ideals, war increasingly menaces Christian character and the Christian way of life. The Christian, therefore, seeks war's abolition, seeing in every war a violation of the spirit and teachings of Jesus.²

While calling on the church to promote "righteousness, justice and peace" in the world, the statement suggested that "Christian discipleship in all nations holds the greatest promise for international peace," and therefore urged that the churches redouble their efforts "toward bringing Christ to non-Christian individuals in all parts of the world." Christian fellowship ought to be extended to all persons, whether they accepted military duty or considered it necessary to refuse such service, the statement counseled. Christians were urged to admit

¹The use of the word "principles" should be noted since Joseph Sittler, under board sponsorship, was to say eight years later that to speak in such a way was to dismiss God. See *supra*, pp. 363ff.

²ULCA, Minutes (1950), p. 556.

their own sin, strive to overcome bitterness and hatred, forgive others, inform themselves concerning people of other nations, aid all who suffered from war, welcome into their congregations persons of all backgrounds and customs, oppose "every type of fanatical nationalism or internationalism," and support all efforts to establish a peaceful world order, especially the United Nations. The statement ended with the exhortation to the Christian to "put his whole trust in the grace of God and the redemptive power of the Gospel."¹

The statement was sufficiently general so that most church members would likely not quarrel with it. It illustrated, however, two problems that were bothering phrase-makers throughout the era being studied. First, what kind of verification did the facts of the present world situation, or of history itself, provide for claims made by the church on behalf of the gospel? For example, how did the claim, "Christian discipleship in all nations holds the greatest promise for international peace" really look like in the face of the historical data from the western world? Second, how could the church summon its people to a total dependence on God and leave any room for a partial dependence upon human beings and institutions without which it seems unlikely human community or world order could prevail?

Dissemination of statements regarding the issues of world peace continued into the decade of the 1950's. A memorandum on the hydrogen bomb was submitted in 1950 to ULCA congregations and to members of Congress. The statement quoted twelve scientists to the effect that the H-bomb was so destructive, its use was no longer morally defensible

¹ULCA, Minutes (1950), pp. 555-558. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 28, 1949, pp. 20-23.

regardless of cause. The memorandum urged that the ULCA consider proposals for a ban on nuclear weapons and for general disarmament.¹

At the 1950 convention, the social missions board presented to the delegates a statement entitled "A Christian Outlook on a Troubled World," which had been drafted by Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, Dean of the graduate school at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and Director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches. It was through Nolde that ecumenical thinking on the issue of war and peace made its most direct influence in the ULCA. The statement urged all men of good will to resist self-righteousness and hatred, to avoid hysteria, to be prepared patiently to persevere in what might be a long struggle against communism in Korea, to remember "the bonds of humanity and faith" which united persons across artificial "curtains," and "to place full reliance upon Almighty God who is the source of comfort in distress and of inspiration for effective action."²

Turning toward more specific governmental action, the statement encouraged support of the United Nations and the establishment of a network of international observer teams to be shifted around the various world trouble spots in an effort to prevent another Korea. At a time in the McCarthy era when the idea of co-existence was anathema in many circles, the statement urged the United States, while being ready to meet aggression, to create "a world setting in which conflicting ideologies may compete peacefully; . . ." Support was also suggested for the

¹ULCA, Minutes (1950), pp. 622-623.

²Ibid., pp. 637-638.

completion of what was termed "an adequate International Covenant on Human Rights," and for a program of economic assistance in underdeveloped countries to block the communist advance. The United Nations was singled out as "the best safeguard against the selfish interests of any single nation or groups of nations."¹

A motion to adopt the statement and to urge congregations to use it as a basis for study and action was withdrawn after some discussion. Instead a motion commending the statement to congregations for study while noting that the statement had been "received" as a part of the social missions report was finally approved.²

Slightly more than one-half year after the 1950 convention, the Board of Social Missions joined the public debate about Korea with a "Statement on the Current Crisis." President Truman and General McArthur were feuding about McArthur's response to Truman's orders for the conduct of the Korean war. The board tipped its hat to the President by affirming "the constitutional and traditional principle . . . that military authority must be subordinate and obedient to the civilian power of the government, . . ." The idea of a "preventive war" was once again rejected and the United States was asked to "lead the way in reversing the mad trend toward a third world war." Members of the ULCA were urged to write their congressmen in support of grain shipments to India. Both Canadians and Americans were urged to support technical assistance programs to underdeveloped countries.

¹ULCA, Minutes (1950), pp. 637-638.

²Ibid. pp. 639 and 979-980. The Rev. Harold Letts told the social missions board that Nolde's statement had been distributed to the clergy and had been well received. Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 19, 1950, p. 21.

Five points prepared by Dr. O. Frederick Nolde were incorporated into the board's statement. The five points called for peace without abandoning armaments or condemning war. Thus United States rearmament was termed "unavoidable." At the same time, United States and NATO countries were asked to inform the United Nations about "their abnormal military preparations and the reasons why these preparations appear to them unavoidable." With an obvious reference to Korea, the proposal was made that neutral observers be invited to watch "our armed forces on foreign soil." Continued recognition of the United Nations authority to handle matters of aggression was supported. At the same time a plea was made to the United States to "demonstrate constant readiness to settle international disputes by negotiations and reconciliation" and "to bring all armaments under international regulation and control."¹

As the events of the Korean war unfolded, the social missions board reiterated its opposition to universal military training for approximately the same reasons it had expressed four years earlier. Nevertheless, it conceded that "some form of draft appears necessary" to support "collective security" through the United Nations.² At the time that the "brink of war" controversy centered around the defense of Quemoy and Matsu in 1956, the Board of Social Missions issued a statement calling for the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores, but added that Quemoy and Matsu were not in the same category. Guardedly the board now said that "military preparedness may be a deterrent force against aggression" and that "no plan of military training or conscription in the United States

¹ULCA, Minutes (1952), pp. 785-786. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 26, 1951, p. 31.

²ULCA, Minutes (1952), pp. 786-788. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, December 7, 1951, p. 1.

should be enacted on a permanent basis." Support for the United Nations was reiterated.¹

Such statements obviously went beyond asserting some general principles by which the state might be guided. Specific governmental policy was endorsed. In the heyday of the social gospel, such a statement would have been rejected as beyond the affairs of the church. In fact, as recently as 1942, the ULCA had rejected membership in the Federal Council of Churches because the latter tended to make statements concerning "political, social and industrial relations." The winds of change were blowing strongly through the ULCA. The actions taken relating to war and peace no longer reflected the attitude of the older quietism.

Equally important to note is that these series of statements did not rise primarily from a theological necessity.² Theological motifs were asserted in the statements, but the moving force was social: the impact of World War II, cold war tension, the Korean explosion, and the threat of atomic destruction. Having moved into the mainstream of American life, America's main problems confronted the ULCA and she replied. With each critical change in the world situation, a new response was given.

Her most elaborate and sophisticated response to the problem of war and peace came in 1960 when the Board of Social Missions presented to the ULCA convention a statement on nuclear weapons. The specific

¹ULCA, Minutes (1956), pp. 1128-1131. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 27-28, 1955, p. 36.

²This is also an inference to be drawn from the remarks of Dr. Franklin Clark Fry to the 1960 convention during the discussion on nuclear armaments. See ULCA, Minutes (1960), p. 819.

recommendations to the delegates were preceded by a fairly lengthy analysis of the complexity of the nuclear dilemma. The threat of nuclear annihilation was recognized. Biblical support was drawn for the idea that God ordained political power but at the same time it was clearly stated that such power could become demonic. The ambiguity of power, its potential for good or evil, was thus clearly noted. No longer were power blocks rejected as they had been in 1945.¹ Now it was understood that the balancing of power, even of nuclear power, might be a deterrent to violence among the nations. No longer was there a simple reference to the providence of God on the basis of which Christians need not fear. Instead, the deep fears of man over nuclear destruction were recognized as real. What was termed "first steps" in the control of nuclear armaments were advocated together with a recognition of the continuing role which armaments had to play. ". . . complete disarmament of nations is neither possible nor desirable . . ." it was said.²

With that kind of introductory tone, the social missions board submitted an eight-point statement to the convention. After lengthy and sharp debate with several attempts at amendment, the convention finally adopted a compromise substitute version which was said to be acceptable to the social missions board. Among those recorded speaking on behalf of the nuclear arms statement were the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, Dr. O. F. Nolde, and Dr. E. A. Steimle.³

The revised statement began with an assertion of the possibili-

¹See supra, p. 398.

²ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 793-797. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, June 11, 1959, p. 11; and September 8, 1960, p. 11.

³ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 813-819, 1026-1028, and 1034-1037.

ties for good or ill of the technological developments which had, the writers said, "developed under the sovereignty of God who continues to rule over men and nations." Because of Christ's redemptive love, however, Christians had the responsibility to see that such developments were used "in the service of justice, freedom and peace" and not in a destructive manner. Thus both the motifs of creation and redemption were used as bases for action. Despite God's lordship and the call to Christian service, however, sin prevailed in the world, the statement said, and hence war was always a threat, though not inevitable. In the quest to abolish war and to seek peace, justice, and freedom, Christians were asked to "oppose and seek to overcome all forms of totalitarianism . . ."¹

One of the points of sharpest debate centered around the third paragraph which initially had urged the governments of the United States and Canada "to wage peace and seek the prevention of war simultaneously by . . . engaging in such forms of peaceful cooperation and competitive coexistence with the Communist world as will not further the totalitarian concept of control."² This statement was ultimately revised to read ". . . engaging with other governments in peaceful competition where important differences exist and in peaceful cooperation where fundamental principle is not compromised." In addition, the governments were urged in both the original and amended versions to help "economically underprivileged nations . . . to attain higher standards of

¹ULCA, Minutes (1960), p. 1026.

²Ibid., p. 797.

living," and to consolidate and extend their ties with the free world.¹

Another point of major conflict arose over a proposed prohibition of the use of armaments if their use would destroy all of human life. The use of weapons was not ruled out--it was justified in the line of defense as a "necessary evil." But their use was said to have limits and such limits were defined as "the extent to which justice and freedom are advanced." The final version of the paragraph dealing with this question read as follows:

We recognize that armaments are today a basic element in international diplomacy. Their possession in peace may serve to deter aggression. Their use in war for purposes of defense may be justified as a necessary evil in a sinful world. Under no circumstances can aggressive or preventive wars be sanctioned. Armaments, both their possession and use, have always been fraught with hazards, but they have now reached a destructive capacity which, if fully utilized, could engulf the nations in a holocaust of mutual annihilation. We are therefore convinced that the decision to have recourse to arms must be determined by the extent to which justice and freedom are advanced. No nation is justified in the use of weapons of such magnitude as would result in the total destruction of human life. At the same time we recognize that the dilemma posed by the availability of these weapons can be resolved in the abstraction only at grave risk. We are persuaded that this dilemma will remain a burden of mankind through the foreseeable future and that decisions must be made humbly and responsibly as each new situation arises. The dangers inherent in the nuclear-space age will be decreased in proportion to the effectiveness of agreements for cessation of nuclear weapons testing and the reduction of national armaments under international inspection and control.²

At a crucial point in the debate, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry injected a point of personal privilege into the discussion to assure the delegates that the issue under discussion was "properly weighed and discussed by Christian people" and that "aside from the gospel itself" the issue was

¹ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 1026-1027. Note again the use of the term "principle" as it has appeared in statements about war, despite affirmations against such usage in Christian Social Responsibility.

²ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 1027-1028.

"the gravest and deepest . . . that confronts our generation." The impact of the ecumenical movement on the ULCA at this point through such persons as Nolde and Fry may be said to have been crucial. The vote "to adopt" which followed the debate marked an important milestone. Previous papers on world affairs had either been issued by single or joint action of church boards or had simply been "received" by the convention. This time the delegates went all the way--debated and adopted the statement.¹

The delegates also voted to call on all nuclear powers to try to achieve agreement to halt nuclear weapons testing and to provide "adequate inspection and control." A continued moratorium on nuclear testing until such an agreement could be reached was approved and a fresh search for new ways to relax the cold war, achieve political settlements, and attain test ban controls was endorsed.²

In examining the "Statement on the Problem of Nuclear Weapons," it is of significance to note the stance from which the statement was made. It did not begin as the ALC had begun, moving from a simple Biblicism directly to problems of current international affairs.³ Nor did it follow the pattern normally used by Augustana under the influence of A. D. Mattson, namely from the nature of love.⁴ In fact, the statement represents a significant shift within the ULCA from the position she had articulated when she spoke on world order in 1949. At that

¹ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 819 and 1036.

²Ibid., pp. 1027-1028.

³See supra, pp. 285ff.

⁴See supra, pp. 289ff.

time, she had formally made assertions about the Word of God as the source for her stance and Christ as her leader and guide. On that basis she had made theological statements which she had attempted to relate to the world situation.¹ In the 1960 statement and the preceding introduction recorded in the minutes, the ULCA begins with an analysis of the world situation. From the context of the nuclear dilemma, she moves back to certain theological statements or what appear to be principles of faith. After these assertions, she moves back to the world situation. Thus the direction seems to be from the world to faith and back to the world. This is the direction suggested by the study on Christian Social Responsibility. Although the movement begins in the world, it does not appear that the ULCA was operating without reference to some norms or principles. Dr. Nolde, in arguing for adoption, strongly emphasized that "recourse to arms must be taken only to the extent to which doing so will advance the ends of justice and freedom."² Moreover, the statement even used the expression "fundamental principle." Hence the statements in Christian Social Responsibility concerning the impossibility of stating Christian faith in terms of principles without rejecting God again emerges as a problem to understanding.

Thus in part, the 1960 statement reflects a new stance for the ULCA. No easy solutions were suggested. Each decision concerning the use of armaments was understood to be fraught with danger and anxiety. Yet in a situation in which the context of the nuclear dilemma meshed with a faith which affirmed the possible use of power for good or evil

¹See supra, pp. 400ff.

²ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 1035 and 1027.

and the over-riding responsibility for peace and justice, the ULCA felt some witness could be made to a world struggling with the possibility of its own annihilation. She was acting in a self-consciously responsible way toward what was likely the major problem of the day with the facts of life and the insights of faith informing her witness.

The kind of change in stance noticeable at the national level was not discernible on the regional level during this period under study. The national leadership was almost always ahead of the synodical groups. The drafters of national statements had participated in the long discussions preparing for the series on Christian Social Responsibility and some of the results are evident.

References to issues of war and peace on the synodical level not only lacked full development but they were also scarce. At Central Pennsylvania in 1946, a motion opposed to Universal Military Training was tabled. The Pacific Synod urged its members in 1952 to write Congressmen in opposition to UMT along the lines suggested by the national social missions board. A similar resolution presented to the New York Synod in 1948 was referred to the committee on reference and counsel, and in 1955, the Pittsburgh Synod recorded its opposition to UMT on any permanent basis. A call for a continued quest to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and secure general disarmament was made to the Michigan convention by the social mission committee in 1956. A year later, a related resolution at the Pacific Southwest convention protesting the continued testing and use of atomic weapons was referred to the commission on social missions. In 1959, Ohio voted to urge efforts to secure agreement banning all nuclear arms. She further voted to say that congregations ought to study "the moral implications of the problem

of nuclear fallout . . ." and to support efforts toward the establishment of an agency independent from the atomic energy commission to keep the public informed concerning "the extent of the problem."¹

The dearth of action on the synodical level regarding the issues of war and peace suggests that the ULCA synods, in contrast to the Augustana conferences, had not prepared the constituency adequately. Thus the action at the 1960 national convention is all the more noteworthy and suggests that the ULCA social missions board and its supporters exhibited genuine leadership by getting the 1960 convention delegates to take the stand that was ultimately adopted. That action stands as a milestone marking a thoughtful corporate witness of the ULCA.

The Relation of the Races to One Another

The record of the ULCA up to the end of World War II concerning the field of race relations was not particularly auspicious,² which was the case with other churches as well. She had begun to see the issue as a problem by the beginning of this period under study, but no great leadership had yet been exerted concerning this grave moral issue. During World War II, for example, the Board of American Missions had urged a stand against antisemitism on the ground that ". . . the acme of Christianity is loving the unlovable, . . ."³

¹Central Pennsylvania Synod, Minutes (1946), pp. 246-247; Pacific Synod, ibid. (1952), p. 105; New York Synod, ibid. (1948), pp. 264-265; Pittsburgh Synod, ibid. (1955), pp. 166-167; Michigan Synod, ibid. (1956), p. 73; Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pacific Southwest, ibid. (1957), p. 89; and Ohio Synod, ibid. (1959), pp. 92 and 156. See also California Synod, ibid. (1948), p. 55; and Midwest Synod, ibid. (1945), p. 71.

²See supra, pp. 195ff.

³ULCA, Minutes (1942), p. 172.

At the 1946 convention, the Board of Social Missions submitted a one-sentence proposal which the delegates adopted. It said simply that "we urge upon our people the practice of the principles of Christian Brotherhood in dealing with peoples of other races, color and nationalities."¹ The term "principles" had apparently not yet fallen into partial disrepute as the study on Christian Social Responsibility was to suggest it should.

The Board of Social Missions began wrestling in earnest with the question of race relations at its November, 1946 meeting. At that time the board protested what it termed the unscientific and unchristian relegation of the Negro to a place of inferiority in society. Discrimination against the Negro was deplored in the fields of education, employment, wages, housing, welfare, medical care, recreation, and rights and privileges as citizens.² This was the beginning of thought and action which ultimately was to bring forth from the ULCA two major statements on this crucial subject.

In 1947, the Board of Social Missions instructed Dr. E. E. Flack to prepare a preliminary statement on the race question. Shortly thereafter the social missions board voted to establish an advisory committee jointly with the ULCA Executive Board to prepare a position paper. A tentative statement was presented to the Executive Board in the summer of 1948 but it was turned down. A new committee was appointed, comprised of Harold Letts and Franklin Koch from the social missions board and F. Eppling Reinartz, ULCA secretary, and Charles Foelsch, Manhattan

¹ULCA, Minutes (1946), pp. 461 and 467.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November, 1946, p. 15.

clergyman, from the Executive Board. This committee decided to rewrite the entire statement with the following guidelines: it was to be more brief, to be addressed to the membership of the ULCA, and, most importantly, to "make the mood of its proposals hortatory rather than mandatory."¹

The Board of Social Missions now decided to bolt from control of the Executive Board and to publish a statement on its own authority. Reporting on these developments to the Executive Board in August, 1949, the Committee on Boards and Committees solemnly stated that in view of the independent action of the social missions board "it is apparent that, whether or not further collaboration will be sought by the Board of Social Missions in the study and final preparation of the statement on race, the question is removed from our docket for the remainder of 1949." Meeting in January, 1950, the Executive Board heard of further independent action of the social missions board. The latter had decided not only to prepare a statement on race but also to distribute it together with a packet of materials on the subject to the ULCA. The Executive Board then adopted a resolution which expressed the hope that "the Board of Social Missions will not adopt its Statement on Race finally nor report it to the convention of the United Lutheran Church without the concurrence of the Executive Board."²

The tug of war between the Executive Board and the Board of Social Missions ended in 1951³ but it had delayed for four years the

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, September 4, 1947, p. 9; February 12, 1948, p. 7; April 29, 1948, p. 16; and ULCA, Minutes (1948), pp. 296-297 and 366.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 11, 1948, p. 17; and ULCA, Minutes (1950), pp. 267-268 and 621-622.

³By 1956, the ULCA had given final approval to a constitutional

issuing of a statement on this problem by the ULCA. When it was issued, it was not submitted to the ULCA convention for adoption. This procedure of board rather than convention action reflected the general stance of the ULCA during the early 50's.¹ By the end of the decade, the ULCA was to make an about face concerning such procedures. Meanwhile the device employed allowed the church to place before its membership a statement on a serious moral issue.

Issuing the statement hurt some feelings. The Executive Board was irritated because the Board of Social Missions actually adopted the statement prior to getting Executive Board concurrence. Having done so, the social missions board later made minor concessions by adopting some suggestions for change from the Executive Board.² Within the Board of Social Missions itself, there was also dissent. A layman, Mr. Lawrence F. Speckman, a judge from Louisville, Kentucky, and a Sunday School teacher for more than a score of years, asked that his opposition to the statement be recorded in the minutes. He did so, he said, because no Negro had requested such a statement, because there was no general mandate from the church, and because the statement admitted as facts

amendment granting the Executive Board "power of review," including veto power, over any action by all ULCA boards "which shall in the judgment of the Executive Board conflict with or be hurtful to the total program of the church." See ULCA, Minutes (1956), pp. 39, 43, and 49.

¹The ULCA handled the 1949 statement on world order in the same manner. Dr. Nolde's statement to the 1950 convention, "A Christian Outlook on a Troubled World," was received by the convention, not adopted.

²For example, the social missions board had entitled the statement "The United Lutheran Church in America Speaks on Human Relations." A similar title had been used concerning world order two years earlier. The Executive Board suggested a more modest title, namely, "Statement on Human Relations Issued by the United Lutheran Church in America." With so little at stake, the social missions board was apparently willing to agree to the change.

items which Speckman said were not true, namely, that minorities were denied freedom for inquiry, discussion, peaceful assembly, police protection, and justice in the courts.¹

In spite of the skirmishes, the 1951 ULCA "Statement on Human Relations" is of great importance because it was the most comprehensive statement on the subject of race relations issued by a Lutheran church prior to the United States Supreme Court decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools.

Part I of the statement listed what was termed seven "Christian principles," suggesting again that Sittler had not yet banned the word from social missions board terminology. These principles included the following assertions which were rooted in both creation and redemption motifs:

* Inasmuch as God created all men in his image, all physical differences or social backgrounds were "of incidental importance."

* "God condemns all injustice, all hatred, all abuse and persecution of men. . . ."

* Because of God's universal atonement through Christ, all men are of equal value in his sight.

* "Forgiveness through the cross restores men to fellowship with God," opens the way for reconciliation between men, and empowers people to "overcome prejudice, discrimination, and exploitation" toward other men.

* "God calls all men through the Gospel to Christian brotherhood. Love, which flows from God, seeks to create justice and true community. . . ."

¹ULCA, Minutes (1952), p. 253; and Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 26, 1951, p. 28.

* Men of different racial, economic, geographic, and social backgrounds, can, under "God's providence . . . co-operate in building true human community."

* The love of Christ impelled men to face all human relationships in the spirit and power of that love.¹

Part II included a list of what were termed "human rights and responsibilities." Some of them antedated ideas which were to be made public law during the next fourteen-year period. These included the following:

* "To possess and to respect life and dignity of the human person as a child of God for whom Christ died."

* "To worship God without human distinctions in the Church, . . ."

* "To develop his God-given talents through education and cultural pursuits . . ."

* "To establish a home in living space and housing conducive to a wholesome family life."

* "To occupy the place in economic life for which he is individually fitted, being free to advance therein on the basis of character and ability."

* "To share the privileges and obligations of community life, having equal access to all public services, including those related to health, education, recreation, social welfare, and transportation, and receiving equal consideration from persons and institutions serving the public."

* "To exercise one's citizenship in elections and all the other processes of government, having freedom for inquiry, discussion and peace-

¹ULCA, Minutes (1952), pp. 790-791 and 253-254.

ful assembly, and receiving police protection and equal consideration and justice in the courts."¹

The concluding section of the statement spoke about some possibilities for Christian action. It called on Christians to acknowledge their sins of pride, hatred, fear, and injustice, to accept responsibility for justice and to reflect fairness and good will in the home toward persons of different backgrounds so that parents would not "pass on to their children the sins of prejudice, . . ." A call was issued to all members to strive for economic justice, fair employment opportunities, fair use of educational funds, just treatment in the courts, and the removal of economic barriers against minority groups. At the same time, members of minority groups were urged to "seek to fulfill in their employment their responsibilities to their employers and fellow-workers, and to the groups affected by their work." Urging citizens to rally, the report said:

Christians have special responsibilities as citizens to make society's laws and practices conform to God's order. Many human rights in which Christians believe, especially rights as to personal safety, citizenship, education, employment, and housing, are not being extended to all men. Christian brotherhood is impeded by practices enforcing segregation. God calls for, and human justice requires, speedy changes at every level and in every area of our society.

Having criticized segregation as a social pattern, the statement now called on the church to "free itself from those cultural patterns of prejudice and discrimination which persist in our society" and "to serve all people fairly without distinction because of racial or cultural background." To such purposes, the statement said, the ULCA summoned "its

¹ULCA, Minutes (1952), pp. 791 and 254.

pastors and people to earnest study and remedial action."¹

While the ULCA was wrestling to formulate a position on this important issue, her boards began to set her house in order concerning possible segregation at the congregational level. The 1946 convention heard a report concerning segregated work among Negroes being sponsored at that time in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Limited cooperative work among Negroes with the American Lutheran Church was also being supported in the amount of \$4,000 annually. Although such work was segregated, the Board of American Missions insisted this did not reflect a board policy of segregation.² When the National Lutheran Council decided in 1950 to undertake work among Negroes, including the work previously supervised by the ALC, the ULCA Executive Board voted to transfer to the NLC the contributions which normally would have gone to the ALC earmarked for Negro work.³ Further efforts to have the ULCA launch special work among the Negroes or in racially mixed communities, was encouraged. Inner city work was subsidized in small amounts. For

¹ULCA, Minutes (1952), pp. 791-792 and 254-256. An earlier draft had also suggested that the ULCA "oppose movements and agencies which advocate prejudice and discrimination on account of race . . ." See Minutes, Board of Social Missions, September 16, 1948, p. 11.

²Ibid. (1946), pp. 307 and 453. See also Minutes (1948), p. 403.

³Ibid. (1950), pp. 350-352. See also Minutes, Conference to Explore Possibilities of Intersynodical Cooperation in Missions Among Minority Racial Groups, March 20, 1944 (in NLC archives); Agenda, NLC, January 23-26, 1945, p. 81; Agenda, NLC, January 22-25, 1946, p. 58; Minutes, ibid., p. 27; Minutes, NLC, January 31-February 3, 1950, p. 23; Agenda, NLC, February 3-6, 1953, pp. 130-131; Agenda, NLC, February 2-5, 1954, p. 173; Agenda, NLC, February 1-4, 1955, pp. 223-224; Minutes, Subcommittee for Church Work in Negro Communities of the Division of American Missions, NLC, February 19, 1952, p. 10, Exhibit A; Agenda, ibid., March 18, 1953, pp. 1-2 and 13; Minutes, Division of American Missions, NLC, September 21-22, 1954, p. 17, Exhibit V and pp. 9-20, Exhibit VI.

example, \$15,000 went to six Negro home mission congregations in 1952. In reporting to the 1954 convention, the Board of American Missions said pastors and congregations should work with persons of all races rather than establish special work with special races.¹

Work was nevertheless conducted among other minority language or racial groups from Germans and Scandinavians to Jews and Orientals. In 1952, the ULCA convention adopted a resolution calling for special efforts to evangelize the Oriental. This resolution moved back and forth among the Executive Board, the Board of American Missions and the Board of Social Missions. The Board of American Missions reiterated its stand that the most important task was for all congregations to open their doors to all races rather than establish special work. They did, however, say that "wherever there is such a concentration of them as to make it embarrassing to existing congregations to have so many of the Orientals unite with them, the Board will consider supporting the organization of separate congregations." The social missions board announced its readiness to accept such a statement provided it "carries no element of race prejudice but refers to practical problems of administration and organization within the congregation."² Questions concerning board policies ended in 1956 when both the Board of American Missions and the Board of Social Missions were reported agreed that "race discrimination is never justifiable in congregations of the ULCA."³

¹ULCA, Minutes (1952), pp. 696, 931, and 952; and (1954) pp. 225-226 and 821-824.

²Ibid. (1946), p. 301; (1948), pp. 389ff.; (1950), pp. 257-260; (1952), p. 1002; and (1954), pp. 739-740, 823, and 308-310.

³Ibid. (1956), p. 313. See also Maryland Synod, Minutes (1951), p. 59. A Synod report said that although American Board Mission policy was to consider mission work among Negro communities like that in any

Developments in the field of race relations moved swiftly during the 50's and it was not long before the Board of Social Missions felt another statement was necessary. The occasion was provided by the 1954 Supreme Court decision regarding school desegregation. First reference to that decision in the social missions board is recorded in the minutes of the April, 1955 meeting. At that time the board approved a statement on desegregation which was submitted to ULCA clergymen. Drawing on the 1951 statement for precedent and authority, the social missions board said that "the Supreme Court decision is in accord with our Lutheran beliefs about the right to equal education." Among other affirmations in the document was one saying there existed "a profound Christian obligation to support and uphold just and responsible governmental authority" concerning the enforcement of the Court decision.¹

When the ULCA delegates assembled at the 1956 convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Board of Social Missions presented a revised "Statement on Desegregation" for adoption by the delegates. The 1954 Supreme Court decision, the statement said, was "in harmony with Christian convictions as expressed in the Statement on Human Relations adopted by the Executive Board of the ULCA and the Board of Social Missions" in 1951. Recognizing what was termed the ULCA involvement in the current moral crisis, the statement proceeded to admonish "congregations and people to work for the fullest realization of the objectives"

other community, nevertheless "the committee recognizes that at a time when there are not sufficient funds available to start work in potentially fruitful fields capable of achieving self support in a limited period of time, the practical effect would be less consideration for a Negro Mission, which, because of the lower income of its members would require aid for a prolonged period."

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 27-28, 1955, pp. 33-35.

of the 1951 statement. The rest of the text was as follows:

We believe that Christians have special responsibilities to keep open the channels of communication and understanding among the different groups in this controversy. The churches can contribute to the solution of the problem by demonstrating in their own corporate lives the possibility of integration.

We furthermore state that due heed ought to be given the following principles¹ by all and especially by those holding civil office, since they hold their power under God and are responsible to him for its exercise.

(1) The public school system so necessary to the maintenance of a democratic, free and just way of life, must be upheld and strengthened.

(2) All parties to the present controversy are in duty bound to follow and uphold due process of law, and to maintain public order.²

Controversy now broke loose on the convention floor. After much discussion and several attempts at amendment, three important alterations were made in the statement. First, the delegates voted to delete the statement affirming the Supreme Court decision to be in harmony with the 1951 "Statement on Human Relations." Because of the convention's retreat from the forthright position advocated by the board, sixty-two delegates recorded their "nay" votes in opposition to the amendment adopted. Among the national leaders recording their opposition was Franklin Clark Fry. Next the delegates proceeded to modify the exhortation to congregations "to work for the fullest realization of the objectives" of the 1951 statement by inserting the phrase "exercising Christian patience and understanding." And finally, the delegates voted to change the sentence that "the churches can contribute to the solution of the problem . . ." by saying "our congregations are encouraged to contribute . . ." The sentences calling for maintenance of the public school system and for

¹It is important to note the board's use of this word since the following year they published their three-volume series rejecting such a term.

²ULCA, Minutes (1956), pp. 1126-1127 and p. 1157.

upholding law and order were retained.¹

At a meeting of the Board of Social Missions a month following the Harrisburg convention, Harold Letts attempted to piece together the various actions and to put them in what he considered a proper and positive perspective. He emphasized that the convention had affirmed the 1951 "Statement on Human Relations." This statement had said that segregation impeded Christian brotherhood, and that an equal opportunity for education was a right everyone possessed, Letts reminded the board. Moreover, the older statement had summoned the church to an inclusive church membership and had urged speedy changes at every level of life. Hence, Letts concluded, a basic policy had been established for the ULCA.²

Letts further argued that the convention action deleting support of the Supreme Court decision meant only that the convention intended to "avoid any implication of approval or disapproval." He said this was the case because "no specific vote indicated the extent of that approval or disapproval." The vote had been 340 to 159 to delete specific endorsement.³

While Letts' argument does encounter considerable difficulty, it is nevertheless the case that the convention action reflected a complex of reasons. Some delegates, Letts said, endorsed the court decision but failed to vote for it lest the separation of church and state be violated. Still others, Letts argued, failed to endorse a judicial

¹ULCA, Minutes (1956), pp. 1258-1262.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 8-9, 1956, p. 43.

³Ibid.

decision they themselves approved lest they offend other delegates.¹ Dr. Harold Haas supported Letts' latter contention. For example, the man who made the crucial motion to strike the Supreme Court endorsement was the Rev. Wayne C. Boliek, a respected member of the Executive Board from Greenville, South Carolina. Dr. H. Odelle Harmon of Lexington, South Carolina, got the delegates' attention when he attempted to read a lengthy anti-integration statement, entitled "Is Segregation Non-Christian?" Dr. Harmon, a candidate for the Lexington school board at the time of the convention, who gained publicity by releasing his remarks to the press in advance of the speech, was also a respected member of the Board of Publication. According to Haas, the convention responded in respect to these and other southern gentlemen.² In connection with these judgments, it must also be noted that some southern synods had already voted approval of the court decision prior to Harrisburg.³

Letts also wanted to remind the board that despite the action concerning the court decision, the Harrisburg convention had told the church to keep open the channels of communication and understanding among the different groups to the controversy, had upheld the public school system, had supported law and order, and had encouraged churches to integrate. Hence Letts proposed that the Board of Social Missions adopt a plan to train 100 leaders to conduct programs throughout the church based on the "Statement on Human Relations." The board, with

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 8-9, 1956, p. 43.

²Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962.

³See infra, pp. 430ff.

Judge Speckman voting no, adopted the proposal, approved calling an associate director of social action to promote the racial education program, and decided to appeal to the Fund for the Republic for money to support the project.¹

Actually, the program that was produced was a bit less ambitious than the one Letts proposed, but one cannot discount the important influence of the action undertaken. An associate director for social action was called, although he did not devote the major part of his time promoting racial education. The Fund for the Republic provided \$10,000 rather than the \$23,000 requested so the Board of Social Missions voted supplementary funds. A synod-wide school on race was held at Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio, in the summer of 1957. It was attended by ninety-two delegates from nineteen synods. As a result of this, follow-up conferences which devoted partial or full use of their time to a study of human relations were scheduled in the Central States, Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, Slovak Zion, New York, New England, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky-Tennessee, Georgia-Alabama, Florida, New Jersey, Maryland, Pacific Southwest, Central Pennsylvania, and the Ministerium of Pennsylvania synods. Letts reported he was encouraged by the results. An effort was made to find a southern leader to conduct schools on human relations in the border and southern states for some months in the late 50's, but it was later reported to the board that none could be found for the job for so short a period.² Action was taken to

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 8-9, 1956, pp. 44-46 and 49.

²Ibid., February 14, 1957, pp. 8, 13, and 15; April 24-25, 1957, pp. 18, 20-23, and 67; June 13, 1957; September 12, 1957, pp. 13-14; November 13-14, 1957, pp. 29-30; February 13, 1958, p. 14; April 23-24,

get the women's, youth, and men's auxiliaries of the ULCA to promote a study of race and modest success was achieved.¹

At the 1958 Dayton convention of the ULCA, an effort was made by the Rev. Arnold F. Keller, Jr., of Allentown, Pennsylvania, to introduce a new statement on the race issue. The brief resolution spoke of being "conscious of our corporate and individual guilt . . . through sins of commission as well as omission . . ." Objection to the idea of individual and corporate guilt was raised by Lt. Gov. Ernest Hollings of South Carolina. A motion from the floor authorized Dr. F. C. Fry to appoint a special committee to study the resolution and report back to the convention. The special committee dropped all references to individual and corporate guilt, acknowledged the church's responsibility for leadership in the area of race relations, commended the social missions board for its efforts to implement its program "in harmony with the principles expressed by the 1956 convention . . .", and assured all pastors and congregations that the ULCA approved and supported efforts at "implementation of these principles."²

Also at the 1958 convention the social missions board reported that the National Lutheran Council had adopted "A Christian Affirmation on Human Relations." The statement was printed in the minutes but no

1958, pp. 51-56; November 12-13, 1958, p. 91; February 5, 1959, pp. 18-19; September 1, 1959, pp. 22-23; November 11-12, 1959, pp. 57-58; and April 26-28, 1960, p. 17. See also, ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 787-788.

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 24-25, 1957, pp. 11 and 16. Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962.

²ULCA, Minutes (1958), pp. 785-786, and 1008-1009. One must also note that the old habit of speaking of Christian faith in terms of principles apparently still lingered, Christian Social Responsibility to the contrary.

recommendation to adopt it was made. The ALC, ELC, and Augustana had all adopted the affirmation.¹

When the ULCA delegates met in Atlantic City in 1960, they found still another issue regarding race relations on their agenda. The New York and New England Synod had been troubled about their ownership of twenty-two shares in F. W. Woolworth and Company common stock because they had read in the press about segregated lunch counters in Woolworth stores. Hence synod delegates voted to protest such segregation to the stockholders of Woolworth and to memorialize the ULCA "to investigate the firms in which it holds stocks as regards discriminatory practices, in service to the public and in employment and finding such, it protest against such practices." No call to sell such stock was made.

The Committee on Memorials recommended to the convention that the memorial not be adopted. The committee said a concern that ULCA investment policies not be "inconsistent with her expressed concern for social justice for all peoples" was valid. Nevertheless she pointed out, "the problems involved in investigating individual corporations" concerning discriminatory practices appeared to be "insurmountable, considering the large number of corporations involved and the complex nature of such investigations." Persons arguing on behalf of the memorial called such action essential to the church's witness.

Among those heard on behalf of the motion was the Rev. Alfred Beck, president of the New York and New England Synod. Among those opposing the memorial was the Rev. Vernon Frazier of the South Carolina Synod. He told the convention that the memorial involved issues in

¹ULCA, Minutes (1958), pp. 757-758.

his synod and that southern people were praying for a solution to the problems. The minutes summarize his speech in this manner: "We long to have the assurance that our brethren in other sections of the country are viewing our dilemma with understanding. We want to hear you say: 'We have faith in our pastors in the South.' We are not helped by those who point accusing fingers in our direction." Then the convention voted the memorial down.¹ It is of interest to note that delegates from the South Carolina Synod are recorded in convention minutes as having raised more opposition to proposed racial statements than delegates from any other synod.

An important question must be raised. Prior to the Supreme Court decision, the ULCA took the most advanced position of the four Lutheran churches under study concerning race relations. After the decision, she adopted the least advanced position. Why? The answer seems to be twofold. First, the ULCA had a far larger southern membership than the other Lutheran churches under study. The ALC and ELC had clusters of congregations in Texas but very few elsewhere. Augustana's southern membership was equally limited. Conversely, approximately 20 per cent of the ULCA congregations and 15 per cent of its members were located in southern or border states.² Second, the ULCA was the only Lutheran church to be comprised of synods which had divided over the question of slavery. Thus the contemporary racial turbulence plus forces of geography and historical memory seem to have influenced the ULCA on this question. This situation once again reinforces the thesis that society forces the hand of theology, not vice

¹ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 69-70 and 1024-1025.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 24-25, 1957, p. 21.

versa.

When one turns to regional or synodical minutes, one finds that the race issue was the most predominant of all social questions referred to at these meetings. Not even the threat of nuclear destruction seems to have caused such a searching of the conscience as racial matters seem to have achieved. Action, however, came chiefly after the 1954 Supreme Court decision. It is of special significance to note the action in the southern synods.

"On the closing day of Synod in 1954," noted a report to the 1955 convention of the Synod of West Virginia, "the Supreme Court announced its decision that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. The church at the local level now remains as the last stronghold of segregation," the report continued. The delegates responded by voting that

. . . we affirm our belief that God is the Father of all men and that Christ has died to redeem all mankind without any racial distinction. That we furthermore endorse the decision of our Supreme Court made in May, 1954, and ask all churches of our Synod plainly to state that their altars, pews and membership are open to men of all races.¹

They reiterated their stand in 1956.²

Florida also came to the support of public school integration. In 1959, she voted to send copies to the governor and members of the state legislature expressing the delegates' "emphatic opposition to any proposal to close the public schools of the state of Florida because of racial issues." She also expressed opposition to "existing amended laws which relegate persons to second class citizenship because of race,

¹West Virginia Synod, Minutes (1955), pp. 62-63.

²Ibid. (1956), p. 95.

color or creed." Following that, the synod set forth a half dozen rights and responsibilities which were outlined as follows:

- * The worship of God without human distinctions in the church.
- * The development of one's talents through educational and cultural pursuits.
- * The establishment of homes in an environment wholesome to family life.
- * The possibility to find a place in economic life suited to the individual.
- * The sharing of privileges and obligations of community life.
- * The exercise of citizenship in all processes of government.

Four years earlier, Florida had voted to say that problems arising from segregation should be solved "in the light of the teachings and guidance of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who recognized no discrimination based on race."¹

Texas joined West Virginia and Florida in support of the Supreme Court decision. In 1955, Texas delegates voted to "urge our church to accept and support the ruling of the United States Supreme Court relative to elimination of racial segregation." They also acknowledged congregational responsibility "to colored people living in our communities" and instructed the home missions committee to "proceed with the establishment of Negro missions in Negro communities on the same basis as other missions." The following year the delegates voted to ask congregations in changing neighborhoods to remain and work with community residents. Resistance to integration continued, however. When the

¹Synod of Florida, Minutes (1959), p. 50; and ibid. (1955), p. 27.

Rev. Royal Leshar resigned as synod president in 1959, he said that were he to have stayed, he would have wished to lead the synod toward a "firmer position on human relations, including integration in our communities."¹

North Carolina expressed concern about racial matters prior to the Supreme Court decision. Reporting on the treatment of minority groups in the synod, especially the treatment of Negroes, the social missions commission in 1952 wrote:

Every opportunity and facility to cultivate a spirit of understanding and good will should be utilized. Right attitudes can be fostered more effectively in the homes of our members, especially where there are children. . . . The church should lead the way to better understanding and Christian treatment of minority groups and eliminate the impression (perhaps justly formed) on the part of many that she is the most intolerant in this matter of race relations.²

In response to 1953 convention action, a Committee on Negro Work was formed. It reported a year later that no synod work had been done among Negroes in North Carolina since 1889. The committee also said they had studied the Bible to find some principles for guidance on race relations. They noted God's love and care for people. Christ's ministry to samaritans and gentiles, and Paul's assertion that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female. Hence they concluded that

. . . anyone who confesses Christ as Lord may be placed in only one category before God, that of "sons of God and joint heirs in Christ." Any exclusion of a son of God from the Communion of Saints, any manifestation or instrument thereof, on such grounds as social status, economic resources or race, is contrary to God's Will and revealed love.

The commission said its members believed the North Carolina Synod was

¹Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas and Louisiana, Minutes (1955), pp. 98-100; (1956), p. 82; and (1959), p. 22.

²United Lutheran Synod of North Carolina, ibid. (1952), p. 141. See also ibid., p. 83.

interested in work among Negroes but was not willing to pay the price, and that the people had not yet been educated nor prepared for all necessary steps. "This fact stands as a judgment upon us," the report continued, "and should spur us on to greater activity to remove these conditions." Meeting only about ten days prior to the court's decision, the synod said:

Humbly acknowledging our sinfulness, and with a sense of deep contrition, we must appraise our present position realizing that there are goals to be reached, attitudes to be cultivated, injustices to be rectified; objectives which cannot be achieved overnight.

Saying they were "fully conscious that these are but small beginnings," the committee recommended four steps: the development of a grassroots program of education in race relations in the synod, the appointment of a special committee to supervise that work, the authorization of the synod to call white or Negro pastors as they may be needed, and the establishment of financial aid to Negro ministerial students.¹

In 1956, while preparations for a social missions institute for the study of race were underway, the annual North Carolina convention delegates voted to

. . . declare herself in opposition to the principle and practice of involuntary segregation of races and in support of equal privileges and unrestricted opportunity for all, and that pastors and congregations be admonished to promote racial good will and understanding by holding and practicing the Christian concept that God is not a respecter of persons, but has "made of one blood all nations of men."²

Also in 1956, the Kentucky-Tennessee Synod voted without objection to adopt a nearly identical but stronger resolution than the one turned down that fall at the National convention in Harrisburg.

¹North Carolina Synod, Minutes (1954), pp. 150-152.

²Ibid. (1956), pp. 118-119. See also ibid. (1958), pp. 193-195; and (1959), p. 170.

Kentucky-Tennessee affirmed that " . . . the Supreme Court Decision of May 17, 1954, is in harmony with the Christian convictions . . ." expressed by the ULCA 1951 "Statement on Human Relations." Affirmed too was the Christian responsibility to keep open lines of communication among disputants, support the public schools, and maintain law and order. The synod delegates also urged congregations and people not only "to work for the fullest realization of the objectives" of the statement but said that Christians ought to be the first to do so. Reports on race relations conferences were made to the 1957 convention, and in 1958, congregations were again exhorted to include all races in their evangelism concerns.¹

In the Georgia-Alabama Synod, uneasiness with respect to racial tensions began to express itself in 1948. The Committee on Social Missions said softly that year that congregations ought to make more Christian the strained racial relations which prevailed. Two years later the same committee urged congregations to use the packet on race relations being distributed by the national Board of Social Missions. The minutes do not record that the recommendation was either received or adopted, although it was standard practice to do one or the other.²

By 1953, the synodical executive committee recommended that a special committee be appointed to study the establishment of missions among Negroes. The convention concurred. A year later, the committee

¹Kentucky-Tennessee Synod, Minutes (1956), p. 49; (1957), p. 68; and (1958), pp. 66-67.

²Georgia-Alabama Synod, Minutes (1948), p. 76; and (1950), pp. 72-73. It should be noted that in 1952 when the same committee urged the convention to study the packet on marriage and the family, the recommendation was adopted. See Minutes (1952), pp. 109-110.

reported it was studying the matter carefully and "proceeding cautiously . . ." Pressure seems to have mounted, however, so the executive committee in 1954 proposed the first step, namely, to join with other southern synods to provide a man to serve as chaplain and head of the religion department at the Piney Woods School for Negroes in Mississippi. Such a plan would realize the first objective for work among Negroes, namely the training of Negro leaders, the recommendation said. No action is recorded concerning the recommendation nor was any action taken on another report saying that if Negro congregations were established, such parishes and their pastors ought to be "integrated into the life of the Synod and its auxiliaries on an equal basis."¹

The same issues were back on the convention agenda in 1955. It was reported that South Carolina had rejected the Piney Ridge proposal. If she did not change her mind, the Committee on Work Among Colored People said, it would recommend that the synodical executive committee provide sufficient funds to carry out the proposal. A fight now broke loose on the convention floor. The special committee on Negro work resubmitted three of the four recommendations made to the 1954 convention on which no action had been taken. These three said that all men were equal in God's sight and hence must be free, that the synod was faced with the "responsibility and high opportunity to minister to Negroes," and that Christians must seek to meet the needs of all men, regardless of race, color, or nationality. No attempt to define those needs was made. Absent from the report was the fourth 1954 proposal stating that if Negro congregations were established, they and their pastors be

¹Georgia-Alabama Synod, Minutes (1954), pp. 57, 60, and 115-116.

admitted to the synod and its auxiliaries on an equal basis. A motion from the floor now asked that the convention adopt the fourth principle also and it was adopted by a vote of 29-17. The proponents held their ground. Two motions to reword and substitute lost. In a moment, all the work was to be undone. Mr. M. L. Zimmerman, a lay member of the synod executive committee, moved that "inasmuch as the spirit of Principle 4 was embodied in Principles 1, 2, and 3, there was no need for it and therefore Principle 4 should be eliminated without substitution." The convention now voted to reverse itself and adopted the Zimmerman motion.

With that skirmish out of the way, delegates received no further proposals concerning the racial issue for five more years. Delegates reporting to the 1957 synod convention about the national convention at Harrisburg made no mention of the "Statement on Desegregation" adopted there, although reference to a statement adopted on marriage and divorce was made. By 1960, however, winds of change were blowing a bit more strongly through the south. It was reported that 113 persons from thirty congregations had registered for the synod Conference on Human Relations sponsored by the Board of Social Missions. Perhaps as a result of this conference, a committee, comprised among others of Synod President Raymond Wood and J. H. Oetgen, national executive secretary of the United Lutheran Church Men, submitted a proposal saying that "the Synod place itself on record as favoring the continued operation of the public schools, exercising patience and Christian love in the midst of social tensions and racial pressures of our day." After defeating 32 to 48 a motion to add the clause, "reminding our people that neither the belief in nor the practice of segregation is compatible with the

Christian faith," the delegates adopted the original proposal.¹

Over in Virginia, interest in the race question dominated social action concern beginning in 1954. That year the delegates received the same proposal submitted to most southern synods concerning the teacher at the Piney Ridge school. The resolution spoke in terms cruelly condescending. "Whereas it is felt that the time is ripe for our United Lutheran Church to crystallize and express its desire to serve the negro people in our Southern states by some positive action," the resolution began, and whereas this action would "afford a tangible assurance of the high purpose of our Church to render a distinct contribution to the negro people," partial support for one teacher at this colored school should be given. The delegates responded affirmatively, but even this "high purpose" fell by the wayside when all the southern synods were not willing to cooperate.²

At the 1955 convention, the synod executive council, representing the leadership of the synod, brought in a vaguely worded statement which said that:

. . . the Lutheran Synod of Virginia call upon its congregations and their members to give earnest and prayerful consideration to the full teachings of Holy Scripture regarding the Brotherhood of mankind under the Fatherhood of God; and urge its members to put into practice the fullest measure of Christian teaching and conduct in their own personal testimony in this field and that the Synod hold itself in readiness to enter upon such specific acts of brotherhood and service to our brethren of the negro race as may be possible in the years immediately ahead.³

The leadership was apparently both disturbed and uncertain what to do,

¹Georgia-Alabama Synod, Minutes (1955), pp. 108-109; (1957), pp. 48 and 113-117; (1959), p. 109; and (1960), pp. 85-87.

²Virginia Synod, Minutes (1954), pp. 69, 73, and 127; and (1955), p. 68.

³Ibid. (1955), p. 72.

so it proposed nothing. When their resolution came before the floor, however, a layman submitted a substitute which was adopted. It simply said that:

the Virginia Synod favor the integration of negroes into the full Church life of the Synod at the earliest possible date and that the Social Missions Committee be directed to present specific proposals for the implementation of this program at the next convention of the Virginia Synod.

No action concerning the public schools or other issues was proposed.¹

Under the convention directive the Social Missions Committee reported in 1956 that they had sent a packet on "Human Relations and Desegregation" to all pastors. "We, as Christians, were not unaware of the discriminatory practices against negroes before the Supreme Court decision relative to their integration in the public schools," the report said. The committee was apparently willing to assert by implication its responsibility for the predicament, but it chose to suggest no remedies. Instead, the committee said the church should put its own house in order, noting as it did that the 1955 resolution which had passed the convention with near unanimity had not been nearly so unanimously received in the congregations. The statement also formally acknowledged the social influences concerning race relations.

To implement a program of congregational integration, pastors were urged to study materials on the race question and to use the annual pastor's school for a study of the integration of Negroes into church life. In addition, it was suggested that the church council's institutes for 1956 study integration into the full life of the church and that congregations and auxiliaries organize local studies of the issue.

¹Virginia Synod, Minutes (1955), pp. 165 and 90.

As well as recommendations for study, pastors and congregations were urged to minister to Negroes living within the limits of their parishes, service from the social missions committee was offered to any congregation attempting integration, and the home missions committee was asked to remember the Negro in planning their work. The report was adopted. A resolution from the floor requesting all educational institutions supported in part or in full by the synod to integrate was tabled.¹

Subsequent conventions called for support of the Institute on Human Relations sponsored by the national Board of Social Missions, and heard reports that the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen and Dr. Martin Heineken had been well received at the social responsibility seminar where the racial issue had been discussed. When the United Lutheran Church Women of Virginia asked the synodical social missions committee what to do about the public schools, the women were referred to the Harrisburg convention action supporting the public schools and the 1955 Virginia Synod resolution calling for integration of church life.²

The weakest voice of all the southern synods came from Mississippi. In 1950, the commission on social missions reported preparations to issue a statement on race. "Just how far the church should go in promotion of social righteousness and justice and in upholding the human rights of man is a problem. Your chairman believes that the Church should set up Christian principles and standards and strive to lift its people to their level."³ Then the voice died.

¹Virginia Synod, Minutes (1956), pp. 117-119 and 130-131.

²Ibid. (1958), pp. 112 and 123; (1960), p. 79; and (1959), pp. 89-90.

³Mississippi Synod, Minutes (1950), p. 20.

Similar silence on racial matters can be noted in South Carolina. In 1945, the social missions committee reported studying how best to deal with the races concerning housing, recreation, and employment. Two years later, the delegates voted that their approach to Negro work would be through "a Negro center or settlement house program." From that time forward, nothing specific was said or done except to report guardedly attendance of South Carolina delegates at some Board of Social Missions seminars and institutes on race. The committee assured the convention in 1958 that such attendance did not commit the synod to any course of action.¹

In the rest of the nation, little action concerning the race question is recorded--less than in comparable regions of the Augustana Synod, for example. Of those synods acting, Michigan was most impassioned and Illinois most pessimistic. In 1958, the chairman of the Illinois Synod social missions commission reported efforts to "project a presentation on race in contemporary society has met with hesitation bordering on resistance."² Michigan's blast came in 1955. The social missions committee lamented the fact there still were Lutherans with "respectable standing" in the church who wished to restrict church fellowship on the basis of race. "Considerable masses" of church members were said to be "so far behind the mind of Christ" on racial matters that the church had abandoned leadership in this field to "secular agencies such as government, business, labor, communications, and creation." In fact, the report charged, the church not only lacked conformity to the mind

¹South Carolina Synod, Minutes (1945), p. 95; (1947), p. 106; (1957), p. 95; (1958), p. 89; (1959), pp. 73-74; and (1960) p. 97.

²Illinois Synod, ibid. (1958), p. 130.

of Christ, but failed to conform even to "enlightened secular social practice." Hence the report said, "the Supreme Court justice, the businessman, the labor unionist have become the teachers of practical Christianity to a heathenized and conforming church." To discriminate in the church on the basis of color was to put both pastors and members of such congregations "under the indictment of the Gospel," the report continued. By contrast, it was said, the nature of love required the acceptance and assistance of one's neighbor.¹

Under instructions from the 1958 convention, the Michigan social missions commission reported on a survey regarding segregation in ULCA operated educational institutions and welfare agencies. The report said there were no restrictions at ten colleges; one college restricted enrollment to whites; one accepted all races except the Negro; and two institutions did not respond. In the welfare field, thirty hospitals reported no restrictions, nine restricted patients to members of the Lutheran church, three preferred Lutherans, two restricted their services to whites, and twelve reported they had no provisions for acceptance of Negroes. Thirty hospitals did not reply.²

In other synodical actions throughout the nation, affirmations were made supporting the Supreme Court decision, supporting covenants on open occupancy for housing, urging integration of the churches, denouncing segregation and discrimination in all its forms, supporting the 1951 ULCA "Statement on Human Relations," and urging action in the fields of housing, education, and employment. Such action was taken

¹Michigan Synod, Minutes (1955), pp. 63-65 and 102.

²Ibid. (1959), p. 124.

primarily in New York and New England, Maryland, Rocky Mountain, Ministerium of Pennsylvania, and Central Pennsylvania.¹ The Pittsburgh Synod, with a social action heritage dating back to the General Synod was quite silent on all social matters during this era, including race.

Efforts within the ULCA to respond to racial conflict reflect a number of things. Quietism did raise its head at the 1956 Harrisburg convention, according to Dr. Harold Haas. This, together with a cultural bias from other sections of the ULCA, blunted the church's witness, but it did not erase it altogether. Indeed, Harold Letts correctly reminded the Board of Social Missions that despite a reversal of some points at Harrisburg, the ULCA nevertheless had made a significant public witness nationally. She did this on a more limited scale regionally.

The theological motivation for such actions seems to have been rooted in both creation and redemption: God had made all men of one blood and had sent his son to die for all, statements said, asserting that both justice and love ought to characterize private and public witness concerning treatment of minority groups. Nevertheless, it was forces outside the church which brought about the public witness: the mistreatment of the Negro focused on the national conscience through the 1954 Supreme Court decision. Thus social, practical, and theological issues of different dimensions merged to inform, inspire, and even retard the church's witness. Quietism, blended with regional and cul-

¹New York and New England Synod, Minutes (1957), pp. 332-333; (1958), p. 86; (1959), p. 174; Maryland Synod, ibid. (1955), p. 100; (1951), p. 59; Michigan Synod, ibid. (1959), pp. 125-126 and 171; Rocky Mountain Synod, ibid. (1959), pp. 27-28; Ministerium of Pennsylvania, ibid. (1956), p. 109; (1955), p. 91; (1959), p. 113; and Central Pennsylvania Synod, ibid. (1955), pp. 148-150.

tural prejudice, pitted itself against a more powerful new theology of social responsibility and a growing national moral indignation. Nevertheless, in such a context, and with a multiplicity of forces influencing it, the ULCA did act within the poles of faith and fact to speak to herself and to the world concerning a developing sense of social responsibility to persons of minority races or backgrounds.

Sex and Marriage

It is perhaps astonishing but nevertheless true that members of the ULCA wrote more about either war or race during this period than about sex and marriage. The latter subject had always been given top billing by Lutherans in talking about matters of social concern. It had shared the spotlight in earlier years with alcohol, gambling, and movies. It is therefore significant that an issue of so great import now stood eclipsed in terms of published concern by two fairly recent arrivals on the social action stage: war and race. This fact indicates something of the broadening social concern in the Lutheran church.

At the same meeting of the social missions board in 1947 as the members voted to begin the preparation of a study on race, they also voted to draft a new statement on marriage.¹ Nine years later, the board submitted a statement to the Harrisburg convention after having previously submitted it to the clergy and congregations for study and reaction.

The 1956 statement is the most comprehensive statement on marriage and sexual expression ever adopted by a Lutheran church in

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, September 14, 1947, p. 9. See also, ULCA, Minutes (1948), pp. 296 and 366.

America. It reflects the guiding hand of Dr. Harold Haas whose chapter on marriage comprised an important part of the Christian Social Responsibility series and says essentially the same thing. It resembled, in several respects, the pioneering lead of Dr. Reuss of the ALC.¹

The statement rejected what was termed the romantic notion that love alone was an adequate basis for marriage. While agreeing that persons who are married should love one another, the statement proposed that the basic relationship be one of fidelity.

All of this points to fidelity as the way to enduring marriage. The prevailing romantic notion that marriage is based solely on love is inadequate. At this point the popular view goes astray. The ambivalence of emotions and of psychological conflicts in all men testifies to the shallowness of such a view. In that moment, however brief, when love turns to hate, the only basis of marriage is faithfulness to holy vows and remembrance of lifelong commitment. Undoubtedly it is true that people who marry should love one another and should continue to do so, but such love is not the sole basis of stability in marriage. That which should hold the two together and nurture the love that brought them together in the first place is fidelity, i.e., faithfulness in that relationship which has indebted them to each other forever and made them one flesh. No romantic love is possible except on the basis of mutual trust in the other's faithfulness. . . .

Faithfulness to each other, not romantic love, enables marriage partners to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. . . .²

Dr. T. A. Kantonen from Hamma Divinity School strongly attacked the proposal at the 1956 convention. The statement "confuses law and gospel," Kantonen was quoted as saying. "I tremble for fear of a church that cannot distinguish between sexual love and God's grace."³ Yet Kantonen was a part of the group who wrote Christian Social Responsibility which spoke about love and fidelity in about the same way with respect to

¹See supra, pp. 266ff.

²ULCA, Minutes (1956), p. 1136.

³Quoted in Lutheran, October 31, 1956, p. 6.

marriage.¹

Regardless of the lack of clarity concerning the use of the term love in the statement on marriage, one thing is clear: the statement does say hate sometimes expresses itself in the marriage relationship; and hate is not agape as Paul talks about it in I Corinthians 13.

The ULCA statement is noteworthy because it suggests a problem involved in some understandings of the expression "faith active in love." George Forell had argued that for Luther, faith was always active in love--active in agape.² In the marriage statement, the ULCA talks about moments when love is interrupted. Sometimes, however briefly, hate enters the marriage relationship; and hate is not agape. Thus the implication of the ULCA statement is that faith is not always active in love; that love--whether eros or agape--is not constant. Sometimes a Christian may love, sometimes hate. Hate is not patient and kind; it is arrogant and rude; it is irritable and resentful; and it fails to bear all things. A realistic assessment of man as he lives in the world, therefore, will not confirm the assertion that faith is always active in love. A critical examination of man in the world thus altered by implication what a church could say to man about himself. This is new ground.

The statement also expressed ideas familiar to traditional Lutheran patterns. For example, marriage was understood as one of God's created orders in society. The relationship which God intended through this created order was the "I-Thou" relationship. Such a relationship involved, in addition to mutual affection and trust, respect for each other's person. Thus it did not allow a mate to regard his partner as an "it."

¹See supra, pp. 381ff.

²Forell, Faith Active in Love, p. 88.

This factor in turn influenced the attitude desired toward sex. Respect for the other person was cited as a compelling reason to preclude pre-marital intercourse. Such respect included "the well-being of others, the significance of family life to the whole community, and the right of all children to be well-born . . ."

Moreover, pre-marital intercourse was said to militate against what Haas in his essay termed one flesh. Extra-marital relationships lead to exploitation and degenerated into lust, the statement said, and were therefore rejected because of the selfishness involved. ". . . the Christian call to service rather than self-seeking pleasure provides the proper motivation for continence," the statement said. Those who erred, however, should receive sympathetic and constructive treatment, it was urged. Similarly, it was recommended that homosexuals, whose sexual expressions were rejected as selfish and as running counter to the intent of creation, be given psychiatric and medical treatment.¹

Facing the question of the population explosion and the use of contraceptives, the ULCA moved to follow the direction that the ALC and Augustana had taken earlier. Planned parenthood was endorsed both in terms of spacing the children and limiting the number of offspring, although parents were exhorted to gratefully accept all children born to them even though not planned. Like her two sister bodies, the ULCA warned that conception control could be misused in marriage as well as outside of marriage. Nevertheless, "by freeing the wife and mother from the fear of too-frequent pregnancy and by limiting the number of children in accordance with the ability of the family to rear and nurture their

¹ULCA, Minutes (1956), pp. 1136-1138.

children properly, conception control may contribute positively to the well-being of the family," the statement said.¹

Speaking about artificial insemination, the board said that "no valid objection" existed if semen from the husband of the impregnated woman was used. When the semen was derived from another man, however, "the case is different," the statement contended.

If the practice becomes widespread, questions of eugenics would emerge. In any case, the legal status of the child is uncertain. Inheritance laws will have to be clarified. The effect on the unity of husband and wife and the effect on the child, if he should become aware of the circumstances of his conception, must be given careful and conscientious consideration.

Nevertheless, the practice was not rejected.²

As over against the stance taken in 1930 which forbade remarriage to anyone but the one termed the innocent party in the case of divorce, the new ULCA position acknowledged that sin is such a complex issue that no one is ever wholly innocent. Because of this factor and because continence is not possible for all persons, remarriage "could well be a lesser evil than fornication." Hence the statement concluded: "Thus the evangelical view would also allow the remarriage of divorced persons on the basis of genuine sorrow and repentance and a chastened attitude toward the new marriage."³

A broader view of marriage and sexual expression thus became a formal position of the ULCA,⁴ as had been the case with the ALC and

¹ULCA, Minutes (1956), p. 1138. The statement used the term "responsible parenthood" rather than "planned parenthood" just as the ALC had done.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 1138-1140.

⁴Some 15,000 extra copies of the ULCA statement were distribu-

Augustana. By withdrawing from the rigid stance on divorce, the statement provided a more understanding position from which to give pastoral care to persons suffering the pain of separation. By dealing with birth control and planned parenthood, the church faced an important issue of the day and provided helpful insight. However, in view of the increased reliability of contraceptive methods, the statement still provides some arguments against pre-marital intercourse, i.e., the danger of pregnancy, that are less valid today than when the statement was adopted ten years ago. Thus if the ULCA, or its successor, the LCA, is going to move between the poles of faith and the facts of life, a revision of the statement may soon become necessary.

The Board of Social Missions As Further Catalyst

The social missions board operated on other fronts in addition to those already surveyed. Three areas of work should still be mentioned. These areas include statements relating to labor, a statement concerning capital punishment, and the establishment of a number of institutes for the study of social issues.

The period following World War II was characterized by a certain turmoil in the field of labor-management relations because of a fairly large number of strikes. Under instruction from the ULCA convention, the Board of Social Missions, together with the Executive Board, produced a statement on labor in 1946. It was a statement which Harold Haas characterized as so general that "all sides to any industrial con-

ted. When the question of birth control erupted in 1958 in New York, the ULCA released a copy of its position. Social missions board members were told the response to that action had been positive. See Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 12-13, 1958, p. 98.

flict could give adherence to most . . ." of the statements. Haas criticized the article for its silence about such questions as the closed and open shop and how to provide welfare insurance.¹

Nine general statements were suggested as basic principles, which again attests to the fairly widespread usage of the latter term in Lutheran circles. Among the principles were assertions that God "recognizes no class system"; the world's resources are intended for human benefit, not selfish purposes; and that "God expects all labor to be amply rewarded."

Following the assertion of basic principles, a dozen duties and rights were listed. Among the duties were affirmations that every man should work, provide adequately for himself and his family as favorably as possible, develop his God-given abilities and "co-operate in the establishment and maintenance of government so that maximum civil liberties may be enjoyed by all with equal protection for all under the law without discrimination as to race, color or creed."

Among the rights listed were, first "to receive a wage commensurate with his abilities and, wherever feasible, in co-operation with his co-workers, to share in the direction and management of his labors"; second, "to set up and to maintain, in co-operation with his fellowmen, such forms of health and accident insurance, provision for medical care, unemployment relief and insurance, and old age pensions as will provide security against the hazards of life"; and third, to organize for collective bargaining. That section ended by saying that "it is the duty of both management and labor to accept and to support proper conciliation

¹Harold Haas, "The Social Thinking of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1918-1948," II, p. 318.

and arbitration in industrial disputes."

The statement closed with a section detailing what the church should do. Among these proposals were such statements as : "champion the just cause of every man, regardless of his social status," "uphold the dignity of labor, whether of head or hand," "protest the use of force, violence and sabotage by either labor or management in industrial disputes," and "talk more about Duties and less about Rights."¹

Following the publication of this statement, the social missions board cooperated with synodical and conference groups in the promotion of study groups in different sections of the church. Among the topics considered were "Christian Teaching on Money and Property," "Wages, Prices and Profits," "Problems of Collective Bargaining," and "Ideals and Realities in the Labor Movement."²

The 1950 national convention voted to ask the Board of Social Missions to sponsor labor-management institutes in metropolitan areas "to encourage a fuller understanding of the Christian approach to the problems of industrial workers and business executives." Two years later, the social missions board reported to the convention that four such conferences had been held in New York and Pennsylvania. In 1953, a School of Industrial Relations was held at Muhlenberg College with 113 delegates from twenty ULCA synods. These kinds of local or regional conferences continued to be held during the 50's.³ While some interest

¹ULCA, Minutes (1946), pp. 241-242.

²Ibid. (1950), p. 621.

³Ibid., pp. 533 and 603; (1952), pp. 789-790; (1954), pp. 710-711; and (1956), p. 1132. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 11, 1948, p. 15; and November 12, 1953, p. 12.

was shown in the question of labor relations, it must be observed that, with growing influence in the country generally, the ULCA turned to questions more immediately bothersome to middle class Christianity.

As Americans moved their eyes from labor-management tensions during the 50's, they focused some of their attention on the prison cells where men waited to die under sentence from the courts. At the September, 1959 meeting of the Board of Social Missions, the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen reported that the Rocky Mountain Synod had asked the social missions board to study capital punishment. A study on the same topic was being conducted in Ohio under the chairmanship of Dr. Karl Hertz of Wittenberg University.¹ With cooperation from the Ohio group, a statement on the topic was presented to the 1960 ULCA convention.

The statement proposed for adoption was preceded by an analysis of facts concerning capital punishment. Among other items, the document said that persons sentenced to death were those with the least resources to protect themselves and that ". . . no one has yet been able to demonstrate that abolition of capital punishment leads to an increase in capital crimes." Moreover, the document said environmental factors contributed to violent crimes and that "insofar as these environments are remediable, we bear the blame if they continue to exist."²

In the statement submitted to the convention, the board argued that the duty of the state to maintain justice implied the right "to take human life when necessary . . ." but that "recognition of this right does not imply a mandate to exercise it." Drawing from the findings and

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, September 1, 1959, p. 25.

²ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 799-800.

judgments of the Ohio group, the board maintained that capital punishment had not been "an effective deterrent to crime" and it was not "an equitable instrument of justice." The board made the latter assertion, they said, because such punishment "tends to fall disproportionately upon those least able to defend themselves" and "makes a miscarriage of justice irrevocable." Hence the board called for abolition of such punishment.¹

The board nearly succeeded in these efforts. They lost by ten votes. Two appeals to the convention seemed to have carried the day against the proposal. One came from Judge Charles B. Zimmerman, a member of the Supreme Court of Ohio and a former member of the ULCA Executive Board. The convention minutes record him as saying, in part, that "I fear . . . there is a good deal of misguided sentimentality in the thinking of those who seek to abolish capital punishment." He reminded the delegates that a jury of twelve persons was required to convict a man of murder and that such juries could recommend mercy. Moreover, he pointed out that convicted murderers had the right to appeal their convictions to the U.S. Supreme Court. The other blow came from the Rev. Edward K. Rogers who read excerpts purportedly from a letter received from J. Edgar Hoover in which the FBI chief supported the statement that capital punishment did deter crime.²

In an interview after the convention the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen talked about the effectiveness of the Zimmerman-Rogers remarks and also said that the social missions board had not employed a proper strategy

¹ULCA, Minutes (1960), pp. 801-802 and 804.

²Ibid., pp. 1108 and 1110.

in presenting the statement. First of all, he pointed out, the statement was introduced at the end of the convention and was given only one hour for debate. Second, he noted there was not sufficient time to answer the Rogers' remark about J. Edgar Hoover. Third, he said there was no time to work with the opponents between sessions and off the convention floor as had been the case with the nuclear weapons statement. In the latter case, strong opposition had also been stated on the floor. But discussions with opponents late into the night plus scheduled public hearings for anyone who wished to protest or to ask questions provided forums for a consensus to emerge on behalf of the board's statement. The absence of these factors, plus the influence of Judge Zimmerman, and the impact of the Hoover letter, doomed the board's proposal, according to Cornelsen.¹

While the effort fell short of adoption, it is nevertheless noteworthy for two reasons. First, it shows the intent of the Board of Social Missions to broaden the sense of social responsibility within the ULCA. Second, it illustrates the method of moving between the poles of faith and the facts of life. Before any theological statement was formulated, a sociological analysis was made to determine the facts of the situation. Hence, it did reflect an important new pattern for viewing social issues.

The action of the social missions board during the post war period thus reflects a varied pattern. They were involved in spearheading the restatement of a Lutheran ethic. They were engaged in drawing up a series of statements on nuclear war, race relations, marriage and

¹Interview with the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, January 17, 1962.

sex, labor relations, and capital punishment. This action involved study, witness, and persuasion.

Such activity was not undertaken without some apprehension within the social missions board itself, however. In 1949, for example, when the board was beginning its study on the racial issue, a survey was conducted among the board membership. Two voted not to touch the subject. Eight voted to publish unbiased information relating to the question. Nine voted to seek to influence people's attitudes.¹ The implication is that the majority of the twenty-one member board did not wish to express a judgment on the issue. It is usually difficult for leaders to lead from a posture of neutrality. As the years went by, the board did seek to influence people about a number of issues but the momentum in that direction developed slowly.

As the board moved to stimulate the development of a broadening social consciousness among the clergy and congregational members, they sponsored a number of institutes designed to study either ethical theory or specific aspects of social responsibility. In the fall of 1949, Harold Letts reported to the social missions board that Dr. Paul Lehmann had spoken to seventy clergymen and laymen at a New York Synod social action seminar the previous June. Also held during that summer were three social mission schools in Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Fremont, Nebraska, with a combined enrollment of 128. In addition, a school on World Order had been conducted at Hartwick Seminary in New

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 10, 1949, p. 21. At the same meeting, it was reported that a majority of the board did favor seeking to influence the attitudes of people concerning such traditional questions as gambling, sex, literature, divorce, and movies. The majority favored publishing unbiased information concerning health, housing, foreign aid, and labor.

York and an undesignated number of seminars had been scheduled by Letts for church leaders to meet simultaneously with meetings of the American Federation of Labor, Congress of Industrial Union, National Association of Manufacturers, American Economics Association, and the National Council of Farm Cooperatives.¹ A School of Industrial Relations was held at Muhlenberg College in 1953 and a year later, a School on the Church and Economic Life was held at Wittenberg University. Attendance at each passed the 100 mark and the discussion was reported to have been vigorous. Two other schools relating to economic affairs were held in New York and New Jersey in 1954 and one each in New Jersey and New York during the following year.²

Reporting to the social missions board in the fall of 1955, the Rev. Harold Letts said he spent eight days in the Maryland Synod speaking to 821 church councilmen on the topics of marriage, race, and alcohol. Other synods also sponsored institutes considering more than one topic. The North Carolina Synod requested the national social missions board to conduct a conference to cover the topics of marriage and family life, industrial and race relations. South Carolina requested a social missions conference in 1956.³ By the end of that year, study programs had been conducted in Virginia, Florida, and Central Pennsylvania.⁴

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, September 8, 1949, pp. 11 and 13; and November 10, 1949, pp. 23-24.

²Ibid., November 12, 1953, pp. 12 and 16; April 21, 1954, p. 17; June 10, 1954, p. 7; and February 9, 1955, p. 21.

³Ibid., November 9-10, 1955, pp. 33 and 37; and April 25-26, 1956, p. 34. See also June 14, 1956, pp. 8-9 for topics covered at North Carolina.

⁴ULCA, Minutes (1956), p. 1132.

While some of the schools and institutes were structured to draw participants from small areas geographically, four were national in scope. They included the series on world order in 1951, marriage and the family in 1953, industrial relations in 1955, and race relations in 1957.¹

When the ULCA met in Harrisburg in 1956, the Board of Social Missions asked for authority to explore and to sponsor evangelical academies similar to those in Germany. After some convention debate, authority was granted to the board to explore but not to sponsor.² This action led to the establishment of the "Faith and Life Institutes." The institutes represent a new approach to social action within the ULCA. The meetings were not intended to draft statements nor to reach a consensus, but to establish conversations among the participants, to face the issues involved, and to ask the right questions. The meetings were designed to be small and selective, generally numbering not more than forty persons.³

Since the meetings were normally planned for vocational groups, topics dealt with such items as farming in an age of technology, the "company man," the changing role of women, and the practice of medicine. Letts reported to the social missions board that the meetings with the doctors reflected the greatest degree of participation and introspection. Conversely, he said, the sessions with the "company men" were the least effective. Letts told the board he had been unsuccessful in getting a

¹ULCA, Minutes (1958), p. 754.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 25-26, 1956, p. 34; and ULCA, Minutes (1956), pp. 1131, 1157, and 1173-1174.

³Minutes, Board of Social Missions, September 12, 1957, p. 82; November 13-14, 1957, p. 31; and April 23-24, 1958, pp. 66-67.

"company man" from the business community to address the group and that "there appeared to be some reticence in this group to recognize the existence of significant problems or ethical dimensions in their responsibilities." Letts observed that when problems were discovered, "many appeared hesitant to discuss them in the group. Some did not see how the church could, or that it should, relate itself to them in a more vital way than had been the case in the past." In fact, Letts said, there was difficulty at all the sessions except those for the physicians in making a vital connection from the Bible studies and theological lectures to the concrete situations in which the participants had to make their decisions. Finally, Letts reported, inasmuch as the names for participation had been received from clergymen, the church had not been too successful in involving non-churched people through these institutes.¹

During the 1958-1960 biennium, social action programming centered around the study of the three volume Christian Social Responsibility series. After concentrating on studies for the social missions board and the clergy, plans were made to promote a study among the laymen. Franklin Sherman produced a study guide, entitled The Courage to Care, to assist the laity in the study of the series.

Board members and staff expressed great concern that the study reach the congregational level. The frank reports and discussions reported in the minutes of the Board of Social Missions suggest that, despite a growing sense of social responsibility, social action had not permeated the local congregation as much as the national leaders desired.

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 23-24, 1958, pp. 68-70.

Rufus Cornelsen reported in 1959 that the synodical social action committees were "generally not ready on their own to set up and hold special conferences for lay groups at this time." For that reason, it was voted to conduct lay studies in only a few synods during 1960 and to expand the program to include the entire ULCA in 1961.¹ Moreover, Cornelsen reported:

The Pastor's Conference on Christian Social Responsibility held throughout the ULCA during the past year, brought to light a widespread confusion on the part of many clergy about the mission of the church in the world, and about the roles of both clergy and laity in the fulfillment of this mission. Still, in the Church of the Reformation, an institution centered, clergy-dominated conception of the church is a major obstacle against a break-through of the Gospel into significant realms of modern life. Pastors, no less than laymen, need awakening to the vision of an "extroverted" church, no longer preoccupied with its own life and growth, but facing out in a creative self-offering to the world.²

Reports of the faith and life institutes scheduled for 1960 contained some disappointments and some hopeful developments. A report on the first institute for twenty-five pastors remarked dolefully that "the group never reached the point of seriously exploring new forms of the ministry which may be demanded by a new age." An institute intended for realtors in the Philadelphia area had to be cancelled because only one person had accepted the invitation two weeks prior to the event, although 400 invitations had been issued. The board was subsequently told that new methods of inviting people should be found and that perhaps the program content should be changed ". . ." to avoid raising the defenses of a group prone to defensiveness." Despite the presence of some discouragement, there was also encouragement. A report about an institute in

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 12-13, 1958, pp. 96 and 56-57; and November 11-12, 1959, p. 57.

²Ibid., November 11-12, 1959, pp. 58-59.

Baltimore focusing on the racial issue said in part:

some who came with restricted views as to the mission of the church appeared to be willing to take a new, open look at the role of their congregation by the time the week-end was over. This type conference seems to have great potential in motivating our inner city congregations to more effective ministry in their unique and challenging situations.¹

Franklin Clark Fry judged the institutes the most forward looking and hopeful developments of our church for the future.²

As the Board of Social Missions moved into the 1960's, they were thus proceeding at an increasing tempo to broaden and deepen the sense of social responsibility which they and their staff so keenly felt. Some of the frustration expressed in the board reports must be understood as that natural to leaders standing considerably ahead of those following, impatient with the pace of those coming behind. The direction of the movement, however, was not in doubt; only its pace. Despite moments of pessimism, Rufus Cornelsen was able to say of the effectiveness of the congregational study of Christian Social Responsibility: we had good results.³

While the board was moving from the national level to the synodical and congregational level, they were also involved in some flanking operations. They were engaged in developing interest within the men, women, and youth auxiliaries of the ULCA to join the mushrooming crusade.

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 26-28, 1960, pp. 17-18.

²Ibid., p. 16.

³Interview with the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, January 17, 1962. Pastor Cornelsen reported to the social missions board in 1958 that his office was besieged with requests for lectures, conference leadership, and participation in consultations. See Minutes, Board of Social Missions, September 11, 1958, p. 13.

By the end of 1960, they had achieved only partial success, but nevertheless, an inroad must be noted. Both Dr. Haas and Pastor Cornelsen spoke of modest achievement in this area. The Luther League spontaneously became involved in the race study. The United Lutheran Church Women became involved in the study of that topic because of recommendations from the National Council of Churches. The Lutheran Men showed little interest until 1961 when they invited the Board of Social Missions to help structure the 1961 Brotherhood program. According to Cornelsen, the most important auxiliary was the student movement. That group was ahead of the church, Cornelsen said, pointing out that Reinhold Niebuhr and John Bennett were given a hearing by the students long before they received a hearing in the church. He said this influence was most importantly reflected in such persons as William Lazareth of Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary, Otto Bremer of the Division of College and University Work of the National Lutheran Council, and William Ellis of New York, an attorney who became a member of the executive committee of the World Student Christian Federation and a member of the Board of Social Missions.¹

As the period under study ended, the Board of Social Missions, which had risen to new heights of leadership within the ULCA, surprisingly found itself temporarily in the midst of a battle about its status in the new church which was to be formed by a merger of the ULCA and

¹Interview with Dr. Harold Haas, January 16, 1962 and the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, January 17, 1962. See also Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 24-25, 1957, p. 11; and April 23-24, 1958, pp. 52-53. It should be noted that student openness to social issues was generally local, not national. Interview with Dr. Henry Hetland, executive secretary, Division of College and University Work, the National Lutheran Council, July 29, 1963. See also Minutes, Council of the Lutheran Student Association of America, 1945-1960 (in the files of the Association); and E. A. Steimle, "They Have a 'Student Church,'" National Lutheran, Fall, 1947, pp. 29-30.

Augustana, together with two smaller Lutheran groups in the early 60's. At a meeting late in 1958, the retiring chairman of the social missions board, Mr. Ernest Scott, reported that the proposed plan called for the establishment of a separate Board of Evangelism and separate commissions for Inner Missions and Social Action. Mr. Scott implied that Dr. Fry stood behind the new proposal. Scott said:

At Dayton, the delegates gave the president of the church everything he showed any indication of wanting. This was a tremendous personal tribute. It has its drawback. It imposes a staggering responsibility upon a man of conscience.¹

Dr. Haas, replying to questions following Scott's remarks, said that neither he nor any of his staff had been consulted by the committee planning the merger. Haas endorsed a separate structuring for evangelism on the practical ground that evangelism, inner missions, and social action had not been coordinated at the local level, but he strongly urged that inner missions and social action be retained as one unit. He took such a position with misgivings, Haas remarked, since the criticism which each of the groups had given each other had been "salutary." In the end, Haas's proposal was adopted. Inner missions and social action were united under the direction of one board in the new church.² An idea which had been adopted in 1938 for theological reasons was now set aside for practical considerations.

Perhaps no more incisive insight into the extent of the developing social responsibility within the ULCA can be found than a remark made by Dr. Harold Haas to the social missions board in 1958:

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 12-13, 1958, pp. 3 and 7. See also the minutes of April 23-24, 1958, p. 12.

²Minutes, Board of Social Missions, November 12-13, 1958, pp. 20-25; and February 5, 1959, p. 17.

It is interesting to note that there is probably more conscious and deliberate theological awareness and concern in the Social Action Department of our Board than in almost any other place in our ULCA structure. It is important for us to keep this emphasis, for it is one of the unique Lutheran contributions in this field.

He observed that at a time when the interest and concern in social action were rising, interest in inner missions was at a low ebb, even though social action had been born in the womb of the inner mission board.¹ Thus social action, which started a weak third among the three emphases of evangelism, inner missions, and social action in the Board of Social Missions, ended the era in a strong second place. That fact points strongly to the developing and broadening sense of social responsibility within the ULCA.

The Contribution of the Journalists

One of the groups most active in attempting to develop a broadening sense of social responsibility among American Lutherans were people who wrote in the church press, particularly Dr. G. Elson Ruff, who became editor of the Lutheran in the fall of 1945. He began by saying he wished to be a teacher of the church.² He wasted no time. Almost overnight he transformed the paper into a crisp, prophetic voice which regularly sought to educate and to enlarge the horizons of the ULCA constituency. He did this first, by writing a series of consistently good and frequently eloquent editorials, and second, by getting authors to write about current issues.

One of Ruff's early concerns was for the laboring man. Lutherans

¹Minutes, Board of Social Missions, April 23-24, 1958, p. 11.

²"In Conclusion," Lutheran, November 7, 1945, p. 50.

needed to understand, Ruff wrote, that "the great bulk of the laboring people of today will not get ahead by individual initiative. Today's situation no longer permits that. They will get ahead by fighting in a new way; that is, by labor unions, picket lines." His sympathy for the laborer went back to the days of the depression, Ruff confessed, when he had seen able bodied men work for twenty cents per hour and where he had seen many who could not find work. ". . . I remember people who had no work, for I stood in line with them at the county poor-board office to help them get their meager food orders." In making those remarks, Dr. Ruff provided additional testimony to a thesis of this paper, namely, that social factors were more influential in developing a social consciousness than theology. In labor-management disputes, therefore, Ruff asserted, his sympathy was "naturally" with the laborer since it was he who suffered most in economic squeezes.¹

In 1947, Ruff wrote an editorial saying he wanted to place "a few flowers on the grave of the OPA." He had just paid fifteen cents for a loaf of bread that used to cost a dime. "I can close my eyes and see the faces of many of those who can't afford 15 cents for a loaf of bread. There are so few who seem to love them, especially among those elected to the U. S. Congress," he wrote. "WE NEED TO HEAR again and again that we are responsible to God for our social behavior. God's longing for us is that we love one another. And God's demand of us is that there be justice in our dealings with one another," he said.²

Midway in 1947, Dr. Ruff wrote about a Toledo attorney who had

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, November 28, 1945, p. 50; and January 30, 1946, p. 50.

²Ibid., May 14, 1947, p. 50.

written him to ask by what authority he spoke on social issues. Ruff replied that there were many acute questions regarding personal and social life about which the Christian conscience needs to be informed.

MY OCCASIONAL PIECES on social questions spring from a belief that our church people are inclined to be dangerously reactionary in their thinking on such matters. I am willing to take very unpopular positions if this will stimulate some to reconsider their social philosophy. I don't care whether the General Baking Company makes 12 per cent, or brokers charge \$3 a bushel for wheat, or bakers get \$150 a week, if the common people can buy as much bread as they need. If they can't, then profits, costs, and wages are too high, and public action is required.

And I strongly believe this is part of the Christian religion.¹

Now tart, now pungent, now kind, now indignant, Dr. Ruff kept probing at the social conscience of the ULCA. As strikes spread in the post-war labor-management disputes, Ruff remained on the side of labor but he saw the need to protect the general public as well.

I don't expect very much logic from the labor unions. Men who live on their weekly pay checks are not in a good position to think far ahead. Union policy is merely the reverse-side of management policy anyhow.

Since it is fairly conclusive that neither management nor labor intends to work for the general welfare, it becomes the duty of government to act on behalf of all of us. That is what President Truman proposed in his message to Congress, and I believe his suggestions should be adopted.

IF IS A FACT regarding human nature that few people ever accept lower profits or wages than they must. In the vast competitive struggle of our modern economy, impulses of the individual must be regulated by public controls gradually and solemnly created.²

In his column, Dr. Ruff criticized both communists and capitalists and once confessed that he had succeeded in pleasing neither. But he stood his ground. When the oil investments of Edwin Pauley became a matter of public and congressional concern, Ruff reiterated his call for governmental action in price stabilization. "Christians are in duty

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, June 11, 1947, p. 50.

²Ibid., December 3, 1947, p. 50.

bound to require their governments to formulate laws which insure justice to the greatest possible extent among men," he wrote.¹

During the labor disputes with US Steel in the late 40's, Dr. Ruff stood unwaveringly in his support of the laborer.

U.S. STEEL won't give in to the union because it wants to put a stop to a drive toward being made into a welfare agency. But if industry doesn't guarantee the welfare of its workers, the government will be pressured into making the guarantee--and we shall have the "welfare state" so many people are worried about.

Because people must have security. Life in a vastly complex industrial society is so uncertain, so frightening to the average man who is at its mercy, that he is willing to pay any price for being sure of the necessities for his family and himself. He will listen to Mr. Stalin or anybody else who seems to be able to promise security.

A man isn't a commodity to be put on the market for what he will bring. Our high-pressure twentieth-century world has to find the way to put the business of earning a living on a firm foundation.²

Concern for the poor, the man who got caught with little power to defend his cause, was a repeated concern in the Lutheran. In 1949, Ruff supported the public housing bill. "A MAN WHO CAN AFFORD to live in a good house on a quiet, shady street is likely to forget about folks who live in tumbled-down shacks," he observed and said that "we Christians should fight hardest of all to get some help for the poorest people."³ In 1950, Dr. Ruff lectured the ULCA about selecting convention delegates and board members from among the laity who could afford the time to come. "That results in selecting professional people, executives, rather than miners or mail carriers," he wrote, warning that "we should steer clear of 100 per cent white-collar laymen to think and speak for us."⁴

¹Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, February 4, 1948, p. 50.

²Ibid., October 19, 1949, p. 50.

³Ibid., May 4, 1949, p. 50.

⁴Ibid., July 19, 1950, p. 50. See also November 9, 1949, p. 50.

As affluence spread during the 50's, Dr. Ruff took up the cause of the laboring man less often. He described the power of the labor unions as "an effective check on industrial management," and said that giving union members better wages was the best way to insure "maintaining a huge volume of business." When, however, senate investigators started to probe into the affairs of David Beck, Teamster's Union president, Ruff encouraged completion of the hearings, saying that "honest labor leaders welcome and will co-operate with this sort of investigation." Ruff called Beck ". . . a threat not only to every truckdriver in the country but to everyone who buys or sells anything that is hauled in trucks."¹

By the end of the era under study, Ruff took a slightly different position. Just before the marathon steel strike of 1959, he pointed out that steel wages and steel income had risen at approximately the same rate since 1948. He still maintained that organization of the laborer into giant unions had been a good thing.

This has, in general, paid off for the benefit of all. When workers get a generous share of the income of industry, they spend their wages, and business is good. The strength of the labor unions is probably the chief reason why such countries as Canada and the U.S. have been extremely prosperous since World War II.

But with the crisis of inflation, Ruff said a new solution was in order: "no wage increase for steelworkers, and a reduction in prices in the steel industry." In this situation, Christian conscience told him to "speak up in favor of good housekeeping in behalf of the whole human family," Ruff said.²

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, October 6, 1954, p. 50; October 12, 1955, p. 50; and April 10, 1957, p. 50.

²Ibid., May 27, 1959, p. 50.

Ruff even rebuked labor. Speaking about the 1960 strike against the Pennsylvania Railroad, Ruff wrote: "Probably nobody likes strikes, except a handful of labor leaders who enjoy their power in being able to close down an industry. Strikes are outmoded, wasteful, and crude as a means of settling economic problems." At one time, when labor had little bargaining power, there had been no other way to resolve differences except to strike, Ruff said. "Now nobody wins a strike. In the end there has to be negotiation, and the results are usually about what they would have been if neutral arbitrators had been given the case in the first place."¹

Ruff's passion was for justice, especially justice for the poor or powerless. He had other concerns too, however. One of them was the preservation of world peace.

In his stance on war and peace, Ruff seemed both realistic and willing to reconcile differences. Sometimes he was pessimistic.

". . . sooner or later the United States will be attacked," he wrote in 1947. Only poor people were safe from robbers and America was rich. Sometimes his wistfulness took a strangely romantic turn. "If American skill and wealth can be put at the service of every people who are in need, and if this is done unselfishly, we shall win loyal friends throughout the world. We shall deserve to live in peace and quiet."²

In almost all of his discussions, Ruff warned against simple solutions. He saw the need for the exercise of power but he thought it should be used with restraint. He was opposed to universal military

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, September 14, 1960, p. 50.

²Ibid., April 9, 1947, p. 50; and September 17, 1947, p. 50.

training, not because he was a pacifist, but because he thought such a policy bred militant militarism. He generally opposed the extension of national self interest, while not denying a country's right to self defense. He was not a fan of Russia but he thought it necessary to co-exist with her or any other communist country, including Red China. He was willing to extend the olive branch to opponents on the world scene while maintaining freedom at home. He defended a country's right to self-determination even if that decision might mean the establishment of a communistic state.¹

He warned against the idea that peace could be secured by building bigger and better armaments. ". . . the main drive of American policy must be along a different road: more Marshall Plan aid, instead of less . . . more effort to aid the agriculture and industry of backward nations . . . more understanding and concern for the problems of others--including the Russians."²

He lauded the peace efforts of Dr. O. F. Nolde and the World Council of Churches, supported the United Nations, cautioned against violence in Suez, and advised reconciliation at the time of the Hungarian crisis. He supported realistic efforts toward disarmament. He attacked the proposal to fight China for Matsu and Quemoy as "senseless" and defended the Cleveland Conference statement endorsing recognition of Red

¹As illustrative of the above attitudes, see Ruff's editorials on page 50 of the Lutheran for the following dates: December 17, 1947; March 31, 1948; April 14, 1948; July 14, 1948; August 25, 1948; April 13, 1949; June 29, 1949; August 9, 1950; March 22, 1950; January 3, 1951; January 17, 1951; April 11, 1951; October 17, 1951; December 8, 1954; May 11, 1955; July 20, 1955; August 6, 1958; August 27, 1958; and July 22, 1959.

²"In Conclusion," Lutheran, March 1, 1950, p. 50.

China. Yet, while having attacked the policies of John Foster Dulles from time to time, Ruff spoke movingly of the secretary's death in 1959.¹

As the era ended, Dr. Ruff was saying about what he had said at the beginning: remain calm and steady, be willing to negotiate, help the poverty stricken countries, serve the cause of honesty and justice, and don't explode the world even when angry about a U-2 affair.²

On the question of race relations, Ruff's position followed lines similar to his stand on international affairs. He wanted people treated fairly and justly. Sometimes he was bluntly critical. At other times he called for calm reason. He almost always pinched the self-righteous and refused to treat the problem as a geographical question.

In 1948, Dr. Ruff confessed that Negro civil rights needed more attention in the Lutheran, although he said it was difficult to write in a helpful way since the problem was "so deeply embedded in the emotions of so many people . . ." He told of a trip to Washington, D.C. planned for fifty-one New York children. The trip was cancelled when it was learned that four Negroes in the group would have to be fed and housed separately. "Who can try to defend that sort of inhuman discrimination?" Ruff asked. "The churches can," he replied. "There aren't many white Sunday Schools in New York where those Negro boys could enroll."³

Later that summer he wrote:

The chief difficulty is in thinking of this question in terms of

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, July 29, 1953, p. 50; November 11, 1953, p. 50; November 14, 1956, p. 50; November 28, 1956, p. 50; July 19, 1957, p. 50; September 17, 1958, p. 50; December 17, 1958, p. 50; and June 10, 1959, p. 50.

²Ibid., October 14, 1959, p. 50; March 9, 1960, p. 50; June 8, 1960, p. 50; and November 2, 1960, p. 50.

³Ibid., May 26, 1948, p. 50.

the present rather than in terms of the past and future. Negroes are in America in large numbers as a result of the most cruel and vicious transaction ever conducted by white men. People were captured, caged, and shipped over here for sale. Every white man ought to be humble in the presence of every American Negro, in memory of the sin of our forefathers against the black man.

. . . Experience proves that when Negroes have real opportunity they become fully as competent and admirable as most white people.

Ruff therefore called for a fair chance for the Negro. "If they aren't given a chance freely, they will take it, and our grandchildren may not be pleased with the results," Ruff counseled. "If we are calm, generous, and thoroughly Christian in our attitudes toward Negroes now, there won't be any race problem by the year 2048," he suggested.¹

Despite his call for Christian treatment of the Negro, Ruff did not tread quickly on the practice of segregation. He lauded the efforts of Dr. Brent Schaeffer, former president of the Mississippi Synod, to make more equal the separate schools for Negroes in Mississippi. Similarly he lauded efforts in Philadelphia to do independent work among the Negroes. "I wish we had reached the point where we could be completely unconscious of such incidental matters as skin pigment," Ruff said. Since that was not the case, however, "the second-best thing . . . is to organize congregations for Negroes, . . ." Ruff concluded. One theme was fixed: Northerners were as out of step in their racial policies as Southerners.²

Ruff gave support to the 1951 ULCA statement on race.

We can be grateful to some of our United Lutheran leaders for an official statement of Christian teaching on this subject. Anybody should have the right "to establish a home in living space and housing conducive to a wholesome family life, . . .

NEGROES OR ANY OTHER FOLKS usually adapt themselves quickly to

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, July 28, 1948, p. 50.

²Ibid., November 16, 1949, p. 50; and March 14, 1951, p. 50.

standards of behavior which they notice around them. If we could forget their black skins, we would soon find they are about like the rest of us in every respect.

We white Christians are rapidly becoming conscious that the ardor with which we work for equal rights of minority groups in our midst is a practical test of the sincerity of our faith. If it is true that we are all equally loved children of the same Father, we must demonstrate that fact in our community life.

We need to have a clear word spoken on this subject by responsible people in our church. The time has come for all white Christians to rid ourselves of prejudice and to get together in a quiet, determined campaign to win equal rights for minorities.¹

As the country awaited the 1954 Supreme Court decision concerning segregation in the public schools, Ruff spoke out in its favor but without pointing fingers at the south. "It would take a court composed of nine Solomons to reach a wise decision in this tremendous case," Ruff wrote. He contended the issue was not a legal one but "whether the country is ready for this interpretation of the Constitution." He asserted steps to give the Negroes equal rights had been "painfully slow" and then asked: "Who can tell if the time has come to end segregation in school?" With those observations made, Ruff proceeded to commend the Virginia and Texas Councils of Churches for urging peaceful acceptance of the court's ruling, whatever it might be. Then he chastized the north rather than the south and tapped the church on the shoulder:

NORTHERNERS GREATED the bad situation in the South by blind and cruel political policies after the Civil War. If the spirit of Lincoln had prevailed in Washington in the decade after the war--or such policies as the U.S. has pursued in Germany since 1945--the race situation would not have become a deep wound in our national life.

Many Northerners are now intolerably smug in condemning the South for its segregation, while in the churches in the North this same segregation is practiced almost everywhere. It's actually the church-

¹Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, August 1, 1951, p. 50.

ches that will be on trial, if the Supreme Court rules against segregation. Although churches can't be compelled by law to accept any members they don't want, the end of school segregation would surely call for an end of church segregation as well.¹

Having expressed some uncertainty about what to do, having complimented the church councils for their action, having fired at the north and at the church, Ruff praised the Negro and then said that "ending segregation in the schools is an important first step, . . ." toward racial equality "for it is in the schools that children are first impressed with a keen sense of racial discrimination." Finally, he wrote:

Almost everybody knows by now that segregation must end sooner or later. The only question left is how soon or how late. If the date is set by the Supreme Court as 1954, there will be severe convulsions in many areas. This is an especially good time for Christians to say their prayers--and begin inviting Negroes into their churches to say prayers with them.²

Ruff's performance was that of a master churchman. He wanted to land a blow but not so hard a one that the recipient would be knocked out. He wanted to take his stand but not on such high ground that he would stand above everyone else. He wanted to encourage the inevitable and to endorse it as right. All the while, he would not allow indignation--his own or that of another--to turn into self-righteousness. In the years that were to follow the historic decision, Ruff pursued the same course, speaking softly and firmly, rarely loudly, and never self-righteously.

Ruff had his Washington correspondent announce the news of the Supreme Court decision to the church while he wrote his page about U.S. relationships to the communist world. His Washington columnist,

¹Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, March 10, 1954, p. 50.

²Ibid.

Robert E. Van Deusen, described the decision as one "stated with quiet dignity and with a sense of social responsibility." Among his observations, he said that "the justices were wise in deciding to defer the actual implementation," that "the timing was excellent" on the international scene, and that "the interval before non-segregation will go into effect provides an opportunity for church people to play a constructive part in the difficult transition."¹

More than a month proceeded without word from Ruff. Then in July, Reinhold Niebuhr was given the lead article in which he argued that the statement "all men are created equal" affirmed "a truth which has been amply proved by every kind of anthropological research. That is, men of all races are potentially equal, their inequalities being due to historical, rather than to natural causes." Moreover, Niebuhr argued, "the Christians must recognize that equality is an imperative of love when it is not a description of reality." Niebuhr then concluded: "We can therefore count it fortunate that the Constitution has incorporated this ideal in our law, which represents both an accurate description of the realities and a statement of the ethical implications of our faith." Niebuhr said the time for the decision was ripe and, like Van Deusen, said the court had been wise to give "the states time to adjust themselves to this new standard."²

Then, as if having waited for emotion to subside somewhat, Ruff made his first comments relating to the court decision. He began by

¹Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, June 2, 1954, p. 50; and Robert E. Van Deusen, "Washington," ibid., p. 11.

²"The Decision on Segregation," ibid., July 14, 1954, pp. 13-14.

focusing attention on Detroit, not Atlanta nor Birmingham. He related a good report about an integrated congregation. "A lot of our people these days are beginning to find joy in this sort of pioneering," he commented hopefully.¹

Youth, Ruff said, would find integration appealing, as he predicted that Lenoir Rhyne College in North Carolina would be "the first ULC college south of the Mason-Dixon line to accept Negroes." Difficulties lay ahead in some states, Ruff agreed, but he encouragingly estimated that "95 per cent of the white people know that segregation is doomed. It's only a question of when it goes."

IT'S NOW TOO LATE to begin organizing Lutheran churches for Negroes. That would have been a valiant effort in 1910.² Now the time has come to go quietly and firmly forward in the normal Christian work of inviting into the membership of our churches any non-churched people who live in the neighborhood.

A century from now, folks will think it was quaint and queer that we were so skittish about color. They won't find anything abnormal or distasteful about whites and Negroes mingling equally in all group life, just as Lutherans in our Carribbean Synod don't find anything unusual about this now.

But meanwhile we have a few difficulties to overcome. And we have the joy of being the people who must risk a little criticism and opposition in putting into practice a basic Christian idea.³

While making his position very clear, Ruff did not ride the segregation issue as a hobby. Some may have wished for more righteous indignation to have poured forth from his pen as it did concerning the laborer in the late 40's. Ruff's usually soft understatement perhaps worked more effectively to influence change than a more militant position may have done. He was very aware of his southern readers. He did not wish to

¹Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, July 21, 1954, p. 50.

²Ruff himself had lauded such efforts three years earlier. See Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, March 14, 1951, p. 50.

³Ibid., July 21, 1954, p. 50.

lose the bulk of them and, in addition, he liked them.

His more quiet approach escalated a bit in 1955 after the synod conventions. He lamented the fact southern synods had been so silent on the racial question after having said "courageous things" the previous year. At the same time that he expressed this disappointment, he also pointed to the stampede in northern cities to sell real estate once a Negro family moved into an area. He concluded his editorial with a word of encouragement for the congregations which had integrated in the past year.¹

Ruff summed up his own attitude of quiet, firm encouragement on the racial issue later in 1955. He wrote:

THERE ARE TIMES when it's cowardly to be patient and slow-moving in obedience to great principles. There are other times when impatient people do much harm. We have various kinds of race discrimination all over the United States. Christians should be keenly conscious of this, and not be satisfied until it is cured. But so long as we are making progress, we can be hopeful without getting impetuous.²

In 1956, the familiar stance showed itself again. Ruff was encouraging to those who changed, sympathetic with those in the midst of struggle, rejecting the extremism of a Westbrook Pegler and Citizens' Councils, refusing to pit north against south.³

When he commented on the Board of Social Missions race statement to the Harrisburg convention in 1956, however, Ruff perhaps leaned too far backward to keep from alienating his southern friends. He said that "a hard-hitting resolution against racial segregation, especially in our

¹Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, May 18, 1955, p. 50.

²Ibid., September 21, 1955, p. 50.

³Ibid., May 9, 1956, p. 50.

churches," would have been welcome. Instead, he said, the board "brought us a mousy little document referring chiefly to the school situation in the South." The most serious objection to the statement, Ruff contended, was that it "aimed at only 17 states--those in which segregation was legal prior to 1954." The northern delegates could have voted for this resolution, Ruff argued and "gone home to their 99 per cent segregated churches with a clear conscience."

It's the Southerners themselves who have to speak on school segregation. They ought to do it at every synod convention until their words are no longer necessary. Some have been doing it.

But the one thing most Southerners resent is having Northerners condemn them as second-class Christians. I know from intimate acquaintance with fellow-Lutherans in the South that most of them are deeply conscientious. They are aware that segregation is on the way out. They need time to get adjusted to the radical change that must come in their society.

I TRUST AND RESPECT these people in the South, and want to be their friend as they struggle with social problems of immense proportions.¹

When the time approached for synod conventions in 1957, Ruff had a word of advice for them. Each synod ought to speak out on the racial question, he said, especially to commend the congregations which had broken the color barrier during the past year. Such action would encourage the courageous. "Convention resolutions don't solve anything, but they make some people think, and they strengthen the position of those who are trying to do something."²

While prodding the church as a whole on this issue and while keeping the olive branch extended to his southern friends, Ruff did not abstain from rapping the knuckles of southern churchmen while he patted them on the back for moving forward. "THE REAL POINT that Southerners

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, November 7, 1965, p. 50.

²Ibid., May 8, 1957, p. 50.

should consider," Ruff wrote just a few months prior to Little Rock, "is that it isn't the North that is trying to push them into integration. It's the twentieth century."

Colored races all around the world are in rebellion against an inferior status. We're fortunate that the American Negroes have been so patient and are so well led. Otherwise there might be guerilla warfare here in America.

.....
It might be good for Northerners to quit giving advice to Southerners, and let them move ahead with solving their problems in their own way. But I get the impression that some Southerners don't want to move. They like things as they have been, and believe things will be that way again if the Northerners keep quiet.

Things aren't going to go back to what they were before. They never do. Negroes have something to say about this, as well as white people. Peace can be maintained only through skillful and intelligent adaptation to changing circumstances.

.....
We're coming through this difficult adjustment surprisingly well, it seems to me. Throughout America there has been rapid social progress among Negroes in the last dozen years. We have plenty to be grateful for these days.¹

Just as Ruff was talking about progress and the need to be grateful, Little Rock exploded before the entire world. Ruff picked up the issue. "INSTEAD OF LITTLE ROCK," he wrote, "let's talk about Philadelphia." He told of a Negro seminarian in the early 40's who had found it necessary to apply to four different Lutheran congregations in Philadelphia before he found one willing to take him. Ruff named names. Nativity Church in Philadelphia at one time would not have accepted a Negro youth "on its own doorstep." While policy in that particular congregation had recently changed, "little is being done about ending segregation in northern churches. Church people in the North are in no position to say scornful things about Little Rock."

Ruff then turned his attention to the south and talked about

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, July 17, 1957.

"white supremacy." This theory represented an attempt to "mask their self-interest against attacks from their conscience, . . ."

Intelligent southern Christians understand this well, and struggle under the heavy burden of their twisted and tragic history. They need sympathy as the wrongdoings of centuries comes unraveled. Northern church people can't indulge themselves in much criticism as long as they aren't trying to clear up the fairly simple problems of their own church segregation.¹

As time went by, Ruff, a skilled negotiator, kept pressing his point for racial fairness, while leaving open the door of sympathy and understanding.² Almost nowhere was the stance of the prophet-tactician so visible as in the editorials where Ruff spoke directly to two southern Lutheran governors, J. Lindsay Almond of Virginia and Ernest Hollings of South Carolina. Ruff noted that both men had repeatedly recorded themselves as opposed to integration, saying "they couldn't be elected if they were suspected of being 'moderates.'" Both men knew, Ruff said, the position of their church on integration. Then he wrote:

GOVERNOR ALMOND is now at the center of the hurricane in Virginia where the state's "massive resistance" to integration is slowly breaking up. I haven't any doubt that he knows exactly what time of day it is, and that he is ready with a strategy of retreat which must be followed. Governor-elect Hollings will more likely be in the same situation before his four years are ended.

I would prefer, of course, that these men might boldly lead their states along the road their conscience must tell them is right. But bold leaders don't often get elected to high offices. There has to be a lot of compromising in political life between things as they are and as they ought to be.

It seems certain to me that Christians in the South are going to come out of their storm cellars before long and insist on an orderly adjustment to equal rights for all. Southerners are not going to let themselves be dominated by racist gangsters. And I think that by the time the record is all in we will have reason for pride in two Lutheran governors in the South.³

¹Ruff, "In Conclusion," Lutheran, October 16, 1957, p. 50.

²See, for example, his editorials, ibid., April 23, 1958, p. 50; and September 3, 1958, p. 50.

³Ibid., December 3, 1958, p. 50.

Nearly a half year later, Ruff conceded in his column that some of his friends had told him his estimate of Almond was too optimistic. "But it is now proven," Ruff continued, "that Governor Almond had a thoroughly realistic understanding of the situation, and also had superb political skill in rallying support for the policy he devised." The policy had avoided "the perils of widespread closing of public schools," he argued.¹ One can only speculate about the impact which Ruff's position had on these two governors. We do know that neither Governor Almond nor Governor Hollings, both of whom had served on ULCA national boards, became a Governor Wallace. Perhaps the position taken by the ULCA and the stance taken by Dr. Ruff helped to prevent that development and thus assisted racial integration in the south.

Ruff wrote about other topics of social concern also. For example, over the years he commended the social missions board for getting a social action secretary, congratulated the board for their statement on marriage, supported the board in their statement against capital punishment. He early and repeatedly attacked the position of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, even going so far as to express hope in 1952 that Wisconsin voters would conclude the senator's "ugly political career." He warned against the abuse of the congressional right of investigation when Capitol Hill committees attacked people without verified evidence. He protested the decision of Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield to bar Lady Chatterly's Lover from the mails. He defended the National Council of Churches against attacks that it was communistic and protested a proposed congressional investigation of

¹"In Conclusion," Lutheran, September 9, 1959, p. 50.

U.S. colleges and universities in the search of communists or communist sympathizers. As the 1960 presidential campaign drew near, Ruff argued that a Roman Catholic ought not be barred from the White House because of his faith.¹

Ruff therefore seems to have fulfilled his desire to be a teacher of the church. By bringing the insight of his faith to bear on crucial social issues of the day, he helped teach the ULCA to broaden its sense of social responsibility. The effort to do so is apparent to anyone who examines the variety of subjects skillfully treated in the brief "In Conclusion" with which every issue of the Lutheran ended.

Ruff worked at his task of being a teacher of the church and of developing a broader sense of social responsibility in another way in addition to his editorials. He did this by engaging writers who wrote on a wide variety of topics expressing social concern. The volume of such articles is so enormous, it is best illustrated rather than summarized.

One of the regular features which Dr. Ruff continued in the Lutheran after he assumed the editorship was a "Washington" column. During the early part of this period, the article was written by the Rev. Oscar F. Blackwelder. These articles were frequently chatty conversations about what was transpiring in Washington, D.C., with occasional quotations from Washington office holders and occasional expressions of

¹See, for example, Ruff's editorials on page 50 of the following issues of the Lutheran: May 11, 1949; November 7, 1956; May 8, 1957; October 19, 1960; April 12, 1950; September 17, 1952; March 24, 1954; April 7, 1954; June 17, 1953; July 15, 1959; July 22, 1953; September 5, 1960; April 29, 1960; March 11, 1953; May 6, 1953; December 16, 1959; May 18, 1960; and July 27, 1960.

personal opinion.¹

In the late 40's, the column came to be written more and more frequently by the Rev. Robert Van Deusen, a member of the public relations staff of the National Lutheran Council. Van Deusen's articles were less chatty. They focused, however, on major new items such as foreign policy, foreign aid, immigration policy, the housing bill, race matters, armaments, taxation, civil rights, civil defense, flood control and irrigation, agricultural policy, and ethics in government. Van Deusen's articles normally were descriptive in nature, rarely hortatory. But their effect was to keep these central issues before the church for its thoughtful attention.²

Immediately following World War II, much attention was given in the Lutheran to the devastation in Europe and the plight of the refugees. Dr. Stewart W. Herman, first an employee of the World Council of Churches, then of the Lutheran World Federation, and finally, of the National Lutheran Council, was a frequent writer. His articles reflected the traditional Lutheran concern for welfare to the needy.³

International affairs were also scrutinized in the Lutheran through the eyes of Dr. O. F. Nolde, professor of Christian Education at the ULCA Seminary in Philadelphia, who became director of the commission on international affairs of the World Council of Churches. He often

¹See Oscar Blackwelder's "Washington" column in the Lutheran from 1945 to 1950, normally between pages 9 and 13.

²See Robert E. Van Deusen's "Washington" column in the Lutheran from June, 1948 through 1960. The articles were normally found between pages 9 and 13.

³See, for example, a selected list of thirty-four articles by Dr. Herman in the bibliography.

reported about his diplomatic missions abroad, argued the need for peaceful co-existence, contended for armament control, and urged support of the United Nations. He saw the need for power to contain power, but tried to argue for the settlement of international disputes on the basis of justice and reason. He was an advocate of foreign aid, the end of colonialism, and a posture of military restraint toward other world powers. Through Nolde, the ULCA heard an advocate of responsible concern in foreign affairs, merged with an understanding of the Christian faith.¹

In 1947, Dr. Ruff introduced another writer: Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, who wrote a series of articles for ULCA readers throughout the late 40's and into the 50's. The articles dealt with both international and domestic problems, woven within the fabric of Niebuhr's understanding of human justice, love, pride, and possibility. Niebuhr probed and educated the social conscience of the ULCA while at the same time pointing out the perils in and the possibilities of each proximate solution.²

Ruff did not only employ these and other nationally recognized leaders to teach the church about her social responsibility. He opened his publication to scores of writers on current topics. In fact Ruff did not publish a single issue of the Lutheran during the entire period

¹See such articles in the Lutheran by Nolde as: "The UN Works for Human Rights," February 25, 1948, pp. 17-18; "A Christian Outlook on a Troubled World," November 1, 1950, pp. 14-15; "What Hope for Peace?", December 20, 1950, pp. 12-15; "This Is Christian Peace Strategy," March 28, 1951, pp. 13-16. See also such articles as: John Foster Dulles, "The United Nations Can Succeed," December 3, 1947, pp. 21-23; and "Freedom Isn't Enough," December 31, 1952, pp. 12-15; Christian A. Herter, "Peace Has a High Price," February 26, 1958, pp. 11-14; Eivind Berggrav, "Where Do Church and State Meet?", August 20, 1952, pp. 17-19; Josef L. Hromadka, "I Collaborate with Communists," July 7, 1948, pp. 19-23; and Rufus Cornelsen, "Let's Learn To Live with Danger," June 8, 1960, pp. 15-18.

²See for example, a selected list of approximately eighty articles by Dr. Niebuhr in the bibliography.

that did not deal with some social issue, ranging from family affairs to international diplomacy. In this way, he sought to guide the ULCA into a constantly wider and broader understanding of social responsibility, corporately and individually. In this development the journalists provided apt leadership. In that group Elson Ruff served as chief architect and master planner.

In Conclusion

It is apparent from the foregoing that the ULCA did express the broadest and most sophisticated understanding of social responsibility during this period than that reflected by any other Lutheran church studied. The leadership for this development came chiefly from the Board of Social Missions and its staff. That group sought to speak to the central social issues of the day. Most of the time, the church followed what the board proposed. Only rarely did the church reject basic ideas.

There were problems involved, however, even in some areas of strength. For example, the ULCA had made a serious effort to provide theological undergirding for the social action movement. She had attempted to combine a contextualism with created orders. It was not altogether clear how this was to be done or if it was desirable. She had said it was not possible to speak of the Christian faith in terms of principles for to do so was to dismiss God. Yet both the social missions board and the ULCA in convention used the term principle both before and after the social missions board said it was inappropriate to do so. More clarity was needed.

Despite that factor, however, the record of the ULCA during this

fifteen year period is amazingly different from Lutheran history thirty years earlier. A great change had occurred and the ULCA was leading the transformation.

In 1962, the ULCA merged with Augustana and two smaller Lutheran groups to form the Lutheran Church in America. Thus the two Lutheran churches which reflected the greatest sense of social responsibility would be able to go forward in this area in a united manner. The momentum in the ULCA and Augustana was sufficiently strong so that merger would not seriously restrict this development. This was not the case for the newly formed American Lutheran Church, which brought together the former ALC and ELC. As one looks at American Lutheranism in the 1960's, therefore, it seems clear^o that the LCA with its social action heritage would stand on the frontier of Lutheran groups concerned about developing social responsibility.

CHAPTER X

POSTSCRIPT

This study has led to three important observations.

The first of these is that there is a developing sense of social responsibility among Lutherans in America; the older quietism within American Lutheranism is dying. Thus the hypothesis of this study has been confirmed. That this is the case is reflected by the increased attention formally being given social issues by the churches studied. These churches have assumed a larger responsibility for shaping the general moral life of the nation by means of corporate witness to their own members and to the rest of society. They have done so by speaking about questions of public policy which in previous generations would have been considered outside the jurisdiction of the church's concern. This change is reflected most clearly in the reaction of the churches to the issues of war and race.

Of the groups studied, this development is the least characteristic of the ELC and the most characteristic of Augustana and the ULCA. This sense of social concern does not exist uniformly throughout the churches nor throughout the country. The absence of it is most noticeable in the upper midwest which is heavily rural and heavily ELC. Its presence is perhaps most noticeable in the eastern and central United States where the population tends to be more urban and where the ULCA, Augustana, and the ALC had larger memberships.

The second of these observations is that the development of a broadening sense of social responsibility seems to have arisen chiefly from non-theological factors. That is to say, social responsibility appears to have developed primarily in response to particular social forces such as the depression of the 30's, the war of the 40's, and the racial tensions and threats of nuclear annihilation of the 50's. This observation corresponds to one of the conclusions reached by men like C. H. Hopkins in his study of the rise of the social gospel among some of the major protestant churches in America. To say it differently, theology does not seem to have played the major role in the development of a broader social responsibility. Even the executive secretary of the ULCA Board of Social Missions spoke of theological undergirding rather than theological leadership for a movement which was already there and growing. One might attempt a parallel to the social gospel movement even further. Walter Rauschenbusch published A Theology for the Social Gospel in 1917 after the movement had already arisen and was flourishing near its peak of influence. Then, as now, both the theology and the social concern were assisted by the momentum of society. To say this is not to assert that theology had no influence whatsoever. But it is to assert that the major impetus appears to have been social rather than theological. Even the statements on marriage--a traditional area of Lutheran social concern--reflected society's moving hand. This was the case in the call for a more understanding view of divorce and in the endorsement of planned parenthood.

The third observation is that a great deal of work remains to be done by American Lutherans in developing an adequate theology to foster a sense of social responsibility within the churches. These spawning

efforts have been traced. Nearly no efforts were discernible in the ELC. In the ALC, the theological pattern was tied closely to marshalling Bible passages which were tied loosely to affirmations concerning social issues. The sharpest break with this pattern occurred when Carl Reuss struck out boldly in support of planned parenthood and appealed not to the Bible but to nature, science, reason, and common sense as sources for his authority to make that break. In Augustana, three main tendencies were noticeable. Men like Ryden seemed to derive their theological base for social concern from a few carefully selected statements attributed to Jesus--statements chiefly understood to relate to war and peace. A. D. Mattson attempted to connect a theology of a Rauschenbusch to Jesus, the prophets, and Luther. Edgar Carlson found his point of contact with society in terms of law and worked his way back to Luther via Scandinavian Reformation research. In the ULCA, Joseph Sittler provided a new option for American Lutherans. He set aside biblicism, legalism, and many of the usual Lutheran categories for ethics. Instead he advocated a situational ethic and talked about Christian ethical decision generating between the poles of faith and the facts of life. He further said that Christian ethics could not be spoken of as propositions and principles without thereby dismissing God. Other theologians affirmed that basic stance, but also spoke in terms more traditional to Lutheran readers. Among those terms were such themes as: created orders, the two kingdoms, Christian vocation, the Word of God, and faith active in love.

These efforts to use older phrases, plucked from the past, purged from what the writers call misunderstandings, and restored to their original dynamic, will have to be allowed to stand the test of history. The same phrases, however used, did not save Lutheranism from social

quietism in all past generations. Therefore there is a question whether they will do so now.

The most overriding need currently is for clarification. It is not clear how the ULCA could speak in terms of principles both before and after Sittler, under sponsorship of the Board of Social Missions, said to do so was to dismiss God. It is not clear whether or how contextualism can be blended with the more traditional Lutheran themes such as created orders. It is also not clear just how one hears or knows the voice of God in the midst of the facts of life's situations, even if one first overcomes the hurdle of affirming God's existence. Some Lutherans talked about the Bible as the source for such knowledge; others talked about a law knowable by reason or about a living word from God. Clearer speech is necessary about the use of each category in trying to respond to social problems.

Lutherans must also take a hard look at their method of verifying assertions. It is unhelpful for the church to make statements which empirical studies falsify. For example, Forell said that Luther believed faith was always active in love--agape--and that Luther was correct in so speaking. Yet the ULCA statement on marriage pointed out that sometimes man acts from complex motivations in addition to agape. Sometimes man hates and hate is not agape. In another instance, Hong asserted that the Christian needed no "oughts." Yet an examination of the race situation showed that the church not only failed to act but failed to apprehend what it ought to do. Statements like those of Forell and Hong lose meaning when placed alongside data derived from empirical observations of men.

There is further a need for clarification concerning the assessment

of man. Who am I and who is he? A man who does not understand himself and his neighbor will likely speak of and to himself and of and to his neighbor ineffectually and even wrongly as the statements about faith active in love illustrate. In this effort, empirical studies must be given status in the church to help us understand and to know more clearly who we are and what the world is like.

Finally, one can argue that history itself is not as clear as many American Lutherans contended concerning what Luther's social ethic was, what impact it had, or how desirable it might be. The dispatch with which American Lutherans embraced Holl's understanding of Luther and rejected that of Troeltsch and Niebuhr deserves scrutiny. Having skipped quickly to a high estimate of Luther's position and contribution, American Lutherans may still have to deal more adequately with Luther's critics.

Additional work thus needs to be done even as it can be shown that American Lutherans have shifted from quietism to an active role in trying to mold society. There has been a developing sense of social responsibility but it is not fully developed. To some, it will be disconcerting to point to an unfinished task. A study of history, however, should already have robbed us of any illusions about achieving a perfect stance. The incompleteness of a movement might even prove enticing.

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PRECIS:

THE HISTORY OF A DEVELOPING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AMONG LUTHERANS IN
AMERICA FROM 1930 TO 1960, WITH REFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN
CHURCH, THE AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH, THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH, AND THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Lutherans in America have generally been described as a group lacking a vital social consciousness and a sense of corporate social responsibility, except for the area of institutional welfare. They have been depicted as quietistic supporters of the status quo, rather than as a group interested in social reform. This portrait has, by and large, been correct.

In the last few decades, however, several significant changes have taken place so that the attitudes and actions relating to social issues on the part of many Lutheran individuals and groups can no longer be portrayed by the usual phrases. Gradually, a new sense of social responsibility has emerged, new understandings concerning social issues have developed, and new patterns for social action have evolved. Some of these new emphases stand in sharp contrast to the past tradition. The change is reflected most clearly in the reaction of the churches to the issues of war and race.

By social responsibility I mean an awakened and broadening consciousness of and concern for the social issues confronting people today, a growing appreciation and acceptance of the corporate obligation of Christian groups to try to resolve the problems of society, an increas-

ing desire on the basis of theological insights to bear a corporate as well as individual witness toward the solution of these problems, and an expanding willingness to serve both as the conscience of the state and the instigator of corporate action to achieve social reform.

This movement was usually led by social action committees which proposed statements and sponsored institutes for study. These committees were aided by key professors, ecclesiastical leaders, the ecumenical movement, and the church press.

Of the groups studied, the ELC reflects the least development and Augustana and the ULCA the greatest change. The development is most noticeable in the eastern and central United States where the population is more urban and where the ULCA, Augustana, and the ALC had larger memberships.

This development seems to have arisen chiefly from such non-theological factors as the depression of the 30's, the war of the 40's, and the racial tensions and threats of nuclear annihilation of the 50's.

Theology seems to have played a secondary rather than a primary role. In the ELC, the old quietism prevailed. Biblicism was strong in the ALC and sections of Augustana where efforts were made to apply Bible passages directly to formulation of social policy. In addition, one effort in Augustana sought to weld a theology of Rauschenbusch to the Bible and Luther, while another effort sought to move back to Luther through Scandinavian Reformation research and relate to society via the law. In the ULCA, attempts were made to merge a contextualism with the more traditional Reformation categories of created orders, two kingdoms, vocation, and law and gospel. Christian ethical decision was said to generate between the poles of faith and the facts of life as one listened

obediently to the Word of God. Basic also was the assertion that to speak of faith in terms of principles was to dismiss God. There was, therefore, no uniformity concerning an adequate theology for social action. Minimally, clarification is needed concerning the language used and the verification of assertions made about both man and God.

PRECIS:

THE HISTORY OF A DEVELOPING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AMONG LUTHERANS IN AMERICA FROM 1930 TO 1960, WITH REFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, THE AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH, THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, AND THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The problem out of which this thesis emerges relates to the manner in which American Lutherans have understood their social responsibility. On the one hand, they have long been recognized for the manner in which they have responded to human need through institutions of welfare. On the other hand, they have often been depicted as quietistic supporters of the status quo, uninvolved in attempts at structural social reform.

During the thirty year period studied, several changes occurred concerning the manner in which American Lutherans tried to understand and to discharge their social responsibility. The purpose of this thesis has been to trace the history of that change, to document the shifting emphasis, to try to account for the change, and to describe what this new and broader understanding of social responsibility involves.

The work is divided into two main sections, together with an introductory chapter and a brief postscript. The first chapter, which precedes the two main sections, introduces the problem and briefly sketches Lutheran attitudes toward social issues from 1870 to 1930. The beginning date of 1870 was chosen because it corresponds roughly to the inception of what came to be known as the social gospel. The first main section deals with materials from the years 1930 through 1944.

The date of 1930 was chosen because that was the year in which the United States found itself in the midst of a serious economic depression. This depression had a profound influence on the development of a broadening sense of social responsibility among American Lutherans. The second main section examines material from 1945 to 1960. The year 1945 was chosen not only because it was a numerical mid-point for the era under study but because it marked the end of World War II. That war unleashed a series of influences which tended to broaden American Lutherans' sense of social responsibility similar to the way the depression had initiated changes in the first period studied. The brief postscript at the end summarizes the main observations made as a result of this study.

Chapter one begins with a discussion of some of the factors involved in the emerging social gospel movement. The chapter notes one of the theses of the studies of that movement by such men as Charles H. Hopkins and Henry May. These men argued the thesis that the chief influences which shaped the rise of the social gospel were sociological and scientific rather than theological. That is, as some Americans confronted the new industrialized, urban centers which rose in the latter part of the nineteenth century, they found their theology inadequate to meet their needs so they changed it.

The social gospel movement assumed responsibility for altering the structures of society as well as for enhancing individual piety. The social structures the group wanted changed most immediately were those of laboring men. Social gospel leaders were therefore interested in such items as working hours, job safety, minimum wages, collective bargaining, old age compensation, financial resources for those injured at work, abolition of child labor, regulation of laboring conditions for

women, and protection for the unemployed.

American Lutherans, during this period, were quite interested in the enhancement of individual piety but they remained rather aloof from the social gospel effort to reshape social structures. There appear to have been both sociological and theological reasons for this aloofness. Sociological factors involved appear to have been the alienation of the immigrant, rural and linguistic isolation, and a tendency toward republicanism. Theological reasons were most closely related to the doctrines of sin, redemption, Christology, and the function of the church. Both sin and redemption were understood primarily in individual, not social categories. Christ's substitutionary atonement was emphasized rather than his moral example. The function of the church was isolated from that of the state.

Lutherans, during this period, focused their social concerns more upon the remedial, welfare work in society. Thus they began the erection of a large number of hospitals, homes for the aged, orphanages, and institutions to take care of the hurt and forgotten among society.

There were, nevertheless, some Lutherans who identified with the broader social concerns of the social gospel. This was especially true in the General Synod, one of the groups which merged to form the United Lutheran Church in 1918. Chief among the leaders of this group was J. H. W. Stuckenberg, a pioneer author in sociology, who taught for a while at Wittenberg College in Ohio. At the time when Rauschenbusch was working in a "hell's kitchen," Stuckenberg sailed for Berlin. His prolonged absence perhaps explains his minimal immediate impact upon American Lutheranism. Among the smaller synods comprising the General Synod, only the Pittsburgh Synod, located geographically in the heart

of an industrial area, reflected much new concern.

The first main section of the paper, dealing with the period from 1930 through 1944, reflects the disturbing influence of the depression on all of the churches studied. The impact of this movement was compounded by vast droughts throughout the midwest in which many Lutherans lived. Lutheran leaders expressed a certain bewilderment about how to speak meaningfully to persons who found themselves crushed by the economic collapse. Most frequently, at the beginning of the era, the church leaders withdrew from the facts of the world and spoke almost blithely about a doctrine of providence many people could not see at work in their world. As the emptiness of such attempts dawned upon the conscience of the churches, leaders began to search for new ways to relate to the world. Out of this quest came the first efforts at what came to be known quite generally as social action.

The first main section is divided into four chapters with an introduction to the work of the National Lutheran Council and the American Lutheran Conference insofar as those agencies fostered and reflected a growth in social responsibility. One chapter each deals with the four Lutheran bodies under study. This division was used to illustrate the differences among the four churches both with respect to what was done and with respect to the pace with which the developments were accomplished.

Chapter two, devoted to the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (which changed its name to Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1946), reflects little development toward a broader sense of social responsibility. This church was the most rural of the four studied and the least Americanized. Most of the leaders of this body tended to speak of the depression as an act of God to punish America for its sins and to thank him

for the fact that none of them were in want. These leaders reflected a very crude doctrine of providence and showed little sensitivity in most of their public statements to the plight of persons caught in poverty through no fault of their own. One of the church leaders, Dr. N. Astrup Larsen, did attempt to point the church in a new direction. He was a former missionary to China who was elected president of the Iowa district of the ELC. In the early 30's, he published a small pamphlet appraising the social gospel positively and urging Lutherans to assume responsibility for the whole of society. Larsen, however, remained largely a lone voice within the ELC. Some help came from laymen who were teachers in colleges operated by the church, but none of the efforts seems to have had much effect.

Chapter three traces the development within the American Lutheran Church. This church was of German background, formed by a merger of smaller German groups in 1930. At the beginning of the period, the leaders, in reacting to the depression, asserted the same crude doctrine of providence that was expressed in the ELC. One person, the Rev. Edward Schramm, picked up an old social gospel concern, the plight of the laboring man. As editor of the Lutheran Standard, he charged the church with failure to restudy her theology in light of new economic, social, and political developments. He early and frequently called for the church to extend its area of responsibility to every sphere of life and to reshape the social structures in which men lived.

When war broke out in Europe, the family and emotional ties to Germany brought anguish to many members of the ALC as they watched their brethren overseas succumb to the rising nazi tide.

As a result of the confusion about the depression and of the

agitation arising from the nazi conquest and subsequent war in Europe, the ALC took an historic step at its 1940 convention. The church confessed publicly that there was need for "enlightenment on current social trends and problems . . ." She further confessed that as a body she had not adequately expressed herself concerning the social issues of the day. Therefore the delegates voted to ask the ALC executive committee to study the current social trends and problems and to offer guidance to the membership concerning those issues.

Out of this action emerged the Board for Christian Social Action. The conscience of the ALC had been awakened. She had become Americanized. The problems of America were her problems. She wanted to know how to react to them. It is significant to note that in her quest, she did not turn to her theological seminaries to ask them to lead the way. Instead, she formed a committee to think and to probe. In the era that was to follow World War II, this committee was to give the ALC leadership in new directions for its social concern. The decision to ask for help, however, was made as the consequence of real and threatening social factors, not theological ones. As a result of the action, a new day began to emerge in the ALC.

Chapter four examines material in the Augustana Lutheran Church of Swedish background. This church also reflected some of the old quietism as the period began. Nevertheless, there was a considerable difference of attitude expressed within the Augustana Church as over against the ELC and the ALC.

The two most important influences on Augustana during this era were also the depression and the war. Both issues were discussed at great length in the two periodicals of the church, the Augustana Quar-

terly and the Lutheran Companion, as scores of authors discussed the need for greater participation on the part of the church in shaping the policies of the nation as well as in fostering individual piety. Among interests early in the period was a fairly widespread support for prohibition.

With this kind of emphasis on the rise within the church, it is not surprising that at its 1936 convention, Augustana voted to establish a Commission on Morals and Social Problems. The commission began work in familiar territory by drafting statements about liquor and gambling and added a third article about labor. Significantly, the first two were adopted, while the third was sent back to committee. By 1939, however, a statement about labor was adopted. Scattered attention was given to the topic at conference conventions.

More attention was given to the subject of war and peace during this period than to any other social issue confronted by members of the Augustana Church. The leader on this topic was the Rev. E. E. Ryden, who became editor of the Lutheran Companion in 1934. He immediately attacked the Versailles treaty, urged the United States to join the League of Nations and the Court of International Justice, and called for national action to prohibit the manufacture of munitions. He attacked all of President Roosevelt's proposals to prepare for war or to aid the allies. He urged neutrality and supported the right of conscientious objectors. Similar sentiments were expressed elsewhere in the church by articles and by convention action, both nationally and at the conference level. These thoughts and actions, which sometimes blended pacifistic and isolationist tendencies, went beyond the old quietism and broke down walls which had hindered churchmen from speaking concretely to the state.

There were other influences also at work within the Augustana Church to assist in the birth of a broader social consciousness. According to studies, Augustana was quite thoroughly Americanized by the middle of the 1920's and was gradually growing more urbanized. The ecumenical movement was an important force in her life throughout this era. Moreover, the increasingly conservative character of American protestantism made Augustana more open to influences from sister churches. And finally, a new group of teachers moved into Augustana's seminary and colleges in the early 30's and left their imprint quickly. These were men whose graduate training had been received at places like Union, Yale, and Chicago. The social concerns reflected by faculty at these institutions were brought back into Augustana classrooms and from there to pulpits and to homes. It was a social concern that extended beyond the more traditional kinds of concerns like temperance, gambling, and family life to such areas as labor-management relations, war, and peace. It was thus a broadening social concern.

Chapter five is devoted to the United Lutheran Church in America, organized in 1918 from a merger of three synods, largely of German origins. Like other Lutheran churches, the ULCA was deeply disturbed by the depression. Quietism expressed itself in some synods whereas new concerns emerged in others. National conventions began talking in general terms about fulfilling the church's responsibility toward society. This discussion was facilitated by the publication of two small volumes dealing with the church's social concern written by Dr. W. H. Greever, ULCA secretary, and Dr. E. P. Pfatteicher, president of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. By 1936, the national convention was wrestling with an eighteen point recommendation from its Committee on Morals and Social

Welfare dealing with such items as capital and labor, injustice in business, Christian education, gambling, indecent literature, liquor, marriage and divorce, motion pictures, and war and peace.

These discussions served as catalyst for a significant action by the 1938 convention. The delegates voted to merge the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare with the Committee on Evangelism and the Board of Inner Missions to form a new structure called the Board of Social Missions. This action was taken because the ULCA believed that social action, evangelism, and welfare were parts of an integrated way of relating to the world.

The social issue receiving the greatest attention in the ULCA throughout the 30's and early 40's was the question of war and peace. Resolutions were proposed at both national and synodical levels expressing alarm about the possibility of war, urging neutrality and arms control. Some support was given to the conscientious objector.

The direction of the movements within the ULCA during this period pointed one way: toward an emerging involvement on the part of the church in shaping the forces within society.

The second major section of the thesis covers the period from 1945 to 1960. Three of the churches reflected significant developments in their broadening sense of social responsibility during this era. These churches were the ALC, Augustana, and the ULCA.

The ELC, which was treated in chapter six, showed almost no change. The latter group did adopt "A Christian Affirmation on Human Relations," drafted by the National Lutheran Council. The statement affirmed the unity of all men in creation, the equality of all men before Christ, the need to admit to congregational membership all persons regardless of race, and the need to root out injustices wherever they

existed with respect to housing, employment, education, and social welfare services. The adoption of that statement, however, represents the only major effort to enlarge the areas for which people were considered socially responsible.

The ALC, which was studied in chapter seven, was given new leadership in the social field by Dr. Carl F. Reuss, who was the first executive secretary of what came to be known as the Board for Christian Social Action. Dr. Reuss was a trained sociologist, not a theologian. He stressed the need to know the facts of a situation before making a judgment.

Under the leadership of Reuss, the Board for Christian Social Action presented statements to the ALC on a wide variety of topics. Some of the statements talked about Christianizing the social order--a direction which would have gladdened the heart of a Rauschenbusch. Authority for this concern was generally rooted in statements from both Old and New Testaments.

The social action board seemed very conscious of the criticism of Lutherans concerning quietism, uncritical obedience to the state, and acceptance of the economic status quo. Hence the board was careful to disassociate its thinking from any views which would grant autonomy to the state and which might reflect a kinship to the actions of some Lutherans during the German nazi period. Instead, the board identified with those who had protested the nazi movement. The board drew heavily from the Second Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, which, under the influence of the Norwegian delegation, had asserted that the state was subject to God's judgment and that the Christian had a duty to be a critical citizen lest the state become demonic.

The ALC social action board also utilized the work of the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference, to which the ALC, Augustana, and the ELC belonged. Dr. Carl Reuss was a member of the conference commission. Consequently, he both contributed to the conference committee work and drew from it for statements to the ALC.

The ALC Board for Christian Social Action did not understand its function to be the writing of a new canon law for either church or state. Statements issued by the board were intended for discussion within the church and were not intended as public exhortations directed to the state concerning policy matters. Board statements adopted or released covered such a wide variety of topics as: the relationship between church and state, segregation and race relations, marriage and divorce, farming, labor relations, freedom for discussion, government fiscal policy, euthanasia, capital punishment, gambling, alcohol, subversive movements, foreign aid, international affairs, public schools, mass communications, movies, censorship, the rural church, war and peace, and religious faith and public office. The national board also gained approval at the 1954 national convention to establish an industrial chaplaincy program.

Perhaps the most creative work done in the ALC was a statement on planned parenthood prepared by Dr. Reuss. Suggested by the National Lutheran Council Committee on Social Trends and submitted first for the American Lutheran Conference, the statement endorsed conception ~~control~~ within marriage. Artificial insemination from the husband's semen was approved, although the use of semen from an anonymous source was questioned. Abortion was permitted if necessary to save the mother's life. To make these statements, Dr. Reuss broke with biblicism and appealed to

nature, reason, science, and common sense as sources for his statements.

In addition to studying issues and preparing statements for use nationally, the ALC social action board established district social action committees. These groups presented reports to regional conventions for debate and action and thus further stimulated the broadening sense of social responsibility.

One important factor was noticeably missing from the ALC action, namely, assistance from the theological seminaries. Related to this was a weak theological relationship to many statements adopted. The factual analyses were clear and unusually non-polemically drawn. The theological basis most frequently came to be a series of Bible passages from which the board attempted to make direct applications to contemporary problems.

Despite the absence of much new theological work, it is nevertheless the case that the ALC had officially decided that changing and redeeming society were a part of the total ministry of that church body. This judgment represents a broadening sense of social responsibility.

Chapter eight moves to a consideration of the Augustana Lutheran Church. One of the features which distinguished the work of Augustana during this period over against the ELC or ALC was the effort to state a theological basis for social action. These efforts were made privately by A. D. Mattson, professor of Christian Ethics at Augustana Seminary, and Dr. Edgar M. Carlson, president of Gustavus Adolphus College. Men like E. E. Ryden, while not publishing books on ethical theory, reflected one methodologically by using a few biblical themes, especially those understood to relate to war and peace.

Dr. Mattson likely exercised the greatest influence of any man within the Augustana Church concerning the growth of a social conscious-

ness. He had taught at Augustana Seminary since 1931 so that by 1960 the vast majority of Augustana's clergymen had studied under him. Moreover, he served as a member or chairman of Augustana's Commission on Morals and Social Problems from the time it was organized until the end of the period studied. In this position, he helped shape the statements on social issues submitted to Augustana's annual conventions.

Mattson had been influenced early in his life by Walter Rauschenbusch. True to this influence, Mattson placed the kingdom of God at the center of his theology. He understood the kingdom to be the activity of God seeking to influence human history. Since God intended his rule for all of life, Mattson argued, the church had to insist that its message affect the public as well as private affairs of men. Calling upon the Old Testament prophets and the example of Jesus as Rauschenbusch had done, Mattson urged Christians to bring love and justice to bear on their lives and on social issues. He criticized capitalism with the indignation of earlier social gospel leaders, supported democracy, endorsed the establishment of cooperatives, and fought for the rights of labor. He talked in classrooms and pulpits, at conventions and in committees with the same notion in mind: to strike quietism dead and to arouse the church to a greater social consciousness. He felt the gospel impelled him to do this and he claimed the sanction of Luther.

Dr. Edgar Carlson reflected the influences of Reformation research in Sweden. He preferred to use the more traditional Lutheran categories of created orders, two kingdoms, law and gospel. In contrast to Mattson, Dr. Carlson argued that it was at the point of law rather than gospel that the church expressed its responsibility to society.

While theological leaders were striving to state a theological basis for social ethics, dynamic forces in the world were creating their own pressure for social action.

The threat of war, with which Augustana had been concerned since the mid 30's, claimed much attention from Augustana committees, convention delegates, and the editor of the Lutheran Companion. These groups opposed universal military training, supported the United Nations, advocated foreign aid, endorsed the Evanston Assembly report about the testing and use of atomic and hydrogen weapons, protested the establishment of international alliances for defense purposes, and called for a study of the recognition of Red China. Those making peace efforts usually appealed to a carefully selected set of biblical quotations for authority.

Led by the Commission on Morals and Social Welfare, Augustana took note of racial discrimination as early as 1948, but did not renounce the practice of segregation until after the Supreme Court school decision of 1954. The change in attitude toward racial issues both in the social commission and the synodical paper reflect the influence of moral persuasion created by the social conditions of the time.

Augustana also adopted a statement in the midst of the McCarthy era defending civil liberties and the rights of free speech and conscience. She adopted the statement on planned parenthood prepared for the American Lutheran Conference by Dr. Carl Reuss of the ALC.

These kinds of efforts, represented by such key persons as Mattson and Ryden, were illustrative of what was happening in the Augustana Church on a broad scale. Elected representatives to national and conference conventions endorsed the new positions with resounding affirma-

tions as if to underscore the acceptance of a broader social responsibility within and by the church. In developing and discharging this responsibility, Augustana spoke not only to her members, as the ALC insisted it did, but thought it appropriate to address the public as a whole as well as government officials. Quietism within Augustana was quietly passing away.

The most urbanized, the most Americanized, and the most ecumenical of the four Lutheran bodies under study was the United Lutheran Church in America. This group also had the most highly developed sense of social responsibility. This church was studied in chapter nine.

Besides urban, American, and ecumenical influences, ULCA leaders spoke of the impact of two world wars and a depression as important factors assisting the emergence of new social concern. Out of these influences, and nursed by Reformation research, there developed a strong movement to find an adequate social ethic.

Within the ULCA itself, four key instruments seem to have assisted the new development. These were the Board of Social Missions and its staff--particularly Dr. Harold Haas, executive secretary of the Board of Social Missions, and the Rev. Harold Letts and the Rev. Rufus Cornelsen, who were, respectively, the first and second social action secretaries of the ULCA--key theological professors, journalists, and the ecumenical movement.

The effort to restate an adequate ethical theory for American Lutherans was officially undertaken by the Board of Social Missions, assisted by professors at ULCA seminaries. The work culminated in the publication of a three-volume series entitled Christian Social Responsibility, edited by Harold Letts. The outline of the work is significant.

It begins in volume one with an examination of the context of contemporary life. It moves back in volume two to an examination of the Lutheran heritage of faith from the Reformation to the twentieth century. Finally, in volume three, it moves from an understanding of faith to what are called the structures of society. Dr. Joseph Sittler, professor at Chicago Lutheran Seminary, said that Christian ethical decision generated between the two poles of faith and the facts of life. Man, in his life situation, was to listen for the living word of God to come to him where he lived and then to act in the peril of free, responsible decision. Other writers identified with Sittler's stance, but tried to blend contextualism with more traditional Reformation concepts such as the two kingdoms, created orders, law and gospel, and vocation.

A certain lack of clarity emerged. For example, Sittler said one could not speak of the Christian faith in terms of propositions or principles without thereby dismissing God. Yet the ULCA and its Board of Social Missions regularly used the term principles both before and after Sittler, with Board of Social Missions sponsorship, said that to do so dismissed God. Methodologically, Dr. Harold Haas demonstrated most clearly what Sittler described the proper stance of ethics to be. In his essay about marriage, sex, and divorce, Dr. Haas began with an analysis of life and then outlined the insight both facts and faith provided.

The social issue which received primary attention in the ULCA during this period was the issue of war and peace. Some statements which were either issued or adopted warned against imperialism, colonialism, and universal military training, and challenged the idea of a preventive war. Other statements urged support of the United Nations, foreign aid,

peaceful coexistence with rival governments, and armaments control. In 1956, the social missions board called for the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores but not Quemoy and Matsu. Finally, in 1960, the Board of Social Missions submitted to the national convention a statement on nuclear war which attempted to move between the poles of faith and the facts of life. The statement recognized the ambiguity of power and contended that complete disarmament was neither possible nor desirable. As affirmed by the delegates, the statement urged peaceful competition between countries without compromise to basic principles and limitation of the use of armaments in the "extent to which justice and freedom are advanced." The delegates also voted to urge all nuclear powers to strive for agreement on halting nuclear weapons testing, provided there was "adequate inspection and control." A continued moratorium on nuclear testing until such an agreement could be reached was approved and a fresh search for new ways to relax the cold war, achieve political settlements, and attain test ban controls was endorsed.

The other big item in the ULCA during this period was race relations. In 1951, the Board of Social Missions and Executive Board issued a statement on human relations which was the most comprehensive statement on race relations issued by a Lutheran church prior to the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools. In 1956, the ULCA convention delegates revised and approved a new statement on race. While deleting explicit endorsement of the Supreme Court decision, the delegates did encourage the churches to demonstrate in their corporate lives the possibility of integration and called for maintenance of public schools and law and order. On the synodical level, many southern synods endorsed the court decision and called for peaceful

compliance with the law.

The Board of Social Missions also led the ULCA in the adoption of a new statement on marriage, sex, and divorce. The statement spoke of fidelity rather than love as the key factor in maintaining the marriage bond, permitted the remarriage of divorced persons who were penitent about the previous family failure, and approved planned parenthood along the lines endorsed by the ALC.

Finally, the Board of Social Missions attempted to stimulate social responsibility during this period by activating synodical social action committees and by sponsoring a number of local, regional, and national institutes and seminars to study some aspect of social ethics. By the end of the era, a special format known as Faith and Life Institutes had been introduced. These were intended for small groups and were usually vocationally centered. The purpose of these efforts was to arouse both clergy and laity at the congregational level to a more responsible social concern.

In addition to the Board of Social Missions and the professors, the journalists did their part to deepen social sensitivity in the ULCA. This was especially the case with Dr. Elson Ruff, editor of the Lutheran. Every issue published after he became editor in 1945 carried some article about a social issue ranging in concerns from family life to international affairs. By writing and printing hundreds of articles about contemporary life, Ruff sought to teach the church to be ethically sensitive to public issues.

Chapter ten contains a brief summary of the observations made from this study. First, there is a developing sense of social responsibility among Lutherans in America. The old quietism is dying. During

the period studied, the churches spoke openly about public policies which in previous generations would have been considered outside the jurisdiction of the church's concern. This change is reflected most clearly in the reaction of the churches to the issues of war and race. This new development was least characteristic of the ELC and most characteristic of Augustana and the ULCA. It was most noticeable in the eastern and central United States where the population is more urban and where the ULCA, Augustana, and the ALC had larger memberships.

The second observation is that the development of a broadening sense of social responsibility seems to have arisen chiefly from such non-theological factors as the depression of the 30's, the war of the 40's, and the racial tensions and threats of nuclear annihilation of the 50's. This observation corresponds to one of the conclusions reached by men like C. H. Hopkins in his study of the rise of the social gospel among some of the major protestant churches in America. To say it differently, theology does not seem to have played the major role in the development of a broader social responsibility. Even the executive secretary of the ULCA Board of Social Missions spoke of theological undergirding rather than theological leadership for a movement which was already there and growing. One might attempt a parallel to the social gospel movement even further. Walter Rauschenbusch published A Theology for the Social Gospel in 1917 after the movement had already arisen and was flourishing near its peak of influence. Then, as now, both the theology and the social concern were assisted by the momentum of society. To say this is not to assert that theology had no influence whatsoever. But it is to assert that the major impetus appears to have been social rather than theological. Even the statements on marriage--a traditional area

of Lutheran social concern--reflected society's moving hand. This was the case in the call for a more understanding view of divorce and in the endorsement of planned parenthood.

Third, it appears as though more work is needed to provide an adequate theology to foster a growing sense of social responsibility. Minimally, clarification is needed. This process ought to show how the new options merge with past traditions since the theologians propose such continuity exists. For example, how does contextualism blend with the more traditional Lutheran themes such as created orders. It is also not clear just how one hears or knows the voice of God in the midst of the facts of life's situations, even if one first overcomes the hurdle of affirming God's existence. Lutherans must also take a hard look at their method of verifying assertions. For example, Forell said that Luther believed faith was always active in love--agape--and that Luther was correct in so speaking. Yet the ULCA statement on marriage pointed out that sometimes man hates and hate is not agape. In addition, there is need for clarification concerning the assessment of man. Who am I and who is he? A man who does not understand himself and his neighbor will likely speak of and to himself and of and to his neighbor ineffectually and even wrongly as the statements about faith active in love illustrate. In this effort to understand who we are, empirical studies must be given status in the church. And finally, one can argue that history itself is not as clear as some American Lutherans contended concerning what Luther's social ethic was, what impact it had, or how desirable it might be. American Lutherans may still have to deal more adequately with Luther's critics.

Thus, while there is a developing sense of social responsibility, there are still some limitations. The incompleteness of the movement, however, should prove enticing.

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